



OPINION 6 THE US ENDORSES INDIA-TIBET TIES

WORLD 9 PUTIN CHALLENGES ARREST WARRANT DURING MONGOLIA VISIT

MONEY 10 MARKETS SETTLE FLAT AFTER RECORD RALLY; NIFTY GAINS FOR 14TH DAY

Published From DELHI LUCKNOW BHOPAL BHUBANESWAR RANCHI RAIPUR CHANDIGARH DEHRADUN HYDERABAD VJAYAWADA

Late City Vol.160 Issue 238 \*Air Surcharge Extra if Applicable

LUCKNOW, WEDNESDAY SEPTEMBER 4, 2024; PAGES 12 ₹3



the pioneer

www.dailypioneer.com

SUMIT ON DEFENDING PARALYMPIC GOLD DESPITE BACK INJURY 11 SPORTS

Royal welcome for PM Modi in Brunei



PM receives a ceremonial welcome in Brunei on Tuesday

PIB

WB Government passes anti-rape Aparajita Bill

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

In the backdrop of a Statewide agitation for justice for the Kolkata lady doctor who was raped and murdered early this month while on duty turning fast into a movement for 'change of the system that harbours rapists and the corrupt,' the Mamata Banerjee Government of Bengal on Tuesday got an anti-rape 'Aparajita' Bill passed unanimously. This makes West Bengal first State to bring in amendments to Central laws dealing with such offences. The Opposition parties, however, called it a diversionary tactics in order to contain the Statewide unrest and assuage peoples' anti-Government feelings. Notwithstanding stringent remarks from the Opposition Bench, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee asked Opposition leader Suwendu Adhikari to help get the Bill signed by Governor CV Ananda Bose and President Droupadi Murmu. Apart from prescribing life imprisonment until death, the Bill, christened 'Aparajita Woman and Child Bill (West Bengal Criminal Laws and Amendment) 2024, provides for death penalty for a repeat



West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee speaks during a Session of the State Legislative Assembly, in Kolkata, on Tuesday. The Aparajita Woman and Child (West Bengal Criminal Laws and Amendment) Bill 2024 was passed during the Session

PTI

offender in cases of rape and sexual offences that lead to a victim's death or leave her in a vegetative state. The Bill was passed at a time when citizens including medical staff of Kolkata formed a 17-km long human chain from Patuli in South Kolkata to Ultadanga in the North. The Bill was also passed when a separate detachment of junior doctors and members of the civil society staged a joint rally in front of the Lal Bazar police headquarters demanding the resignation of Police Commissioner Vineet Goyal

for failing to act in an impartial manner. Saying that rape was a 'curse on the human society and that there was a need for social reforms to stop such crimes, the Chief Minister said that 'the Bill seeks to plug the loopholes in the central legislation.' She also appealed to the Opposition BJP to get the Governor's assent 'instead of politicising the issue,' even as Leader of Opposition attacked the Government for supporting a system where rapes and murders had become the order of the day.

'It is your Government and the police that had investigated the infamous Kamduni rape case in such a manner that all the accused save one got acquitted and even the one who was not got his death sentence commuted to life sentence ... if this was not the result of the Government's apathy to such cases then what is ... In Kamduni rape case the Government changed 16 Public Prosecutors to ensure that the rapists who were the members of the TMC get acquitted,' Adhikari said. Continued on Page 8



India's Air Defence gets future ready

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

With a view to sustaining the modernisation drive and operational readiness of the Armed forces, ten proposals worth ₹1,45 lakh crore were given the go-ahead on Tuesday. They include Future Ready Combat Vehicles, Air Defence Fire Control Radars, Dornier-228 aircraft, Next Generation Fast Patrol and Offshore Patrol Vessels. Notably, of the total cost of proposals, 99 per cent is from indigenous sources under Buy (Indian) and Buy (Indi-Indigenously Designed Developed and Manufactured) categories, defence ministry said here. Giving details, officials said Defence Acquisition Council (DAC), under the chairmanship of Defence Minister Rajnath Singh accorded Acceptance of Necessity (AoN) for 10 capital acquisition proposals amounting to ₹1,44,716 crore. The DAC is the apex body to clear acquisition proposals of the Armed forces. The final nod is given by Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS). Continued on Page 8

Nine Naxalites killed in Bastar

PTI ■ DANTEWADA

Nine Naxalites were killed in an encounter with security personnel in Bastar region of Chhattisgarh on Tuesday, a senior police official said. The gunfight broke out around 10.30 am in the forest along the border of Dantewada and Bijapur districts when a joint team of security forces was out on an anti-Naxal operation, Inspector General of Police,



Bastar Range Sundarraj P told PTI. Personnel belonging to the District Reserve Guard (DRG) and the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) were involved in the operation, which was launched based on inputs about the presence of Naxalites belonging to its west Bastar division unit, he said. The intermittent exchange of fire lasted for a long duration, following which the bodies of nine Naxalites clad in 'uniform' were recovered from the spot, he said.

Former chief of iconic Atlas Cycles shoots himself to death



SAUMYA SHUKLA ■ NEW DELHI

Former president of Atlas Cycles Salil Kapoor allegedly committed suicide at his Lutyen's Delhi home on APJ Abdul Kalam Marg on Tuesday afternoon. The 70-year-old man allegedly shot himself with his licensed pistol and was found dead on the ground floor of his three-storey house at around 1 pm. According to a senior police officer, his manager found his body lying in a pool of blood near the puja room of his home. A suicide note was recovered in which Kapoor mentioned the name of about four to five people accusing them of harassing him. The suicide note also mentions him facing some financial difficulties. He wrote that he had 'financial

burden' on him. He was reportedly living separately from his family including his wife and three children, who are currently based in Dubai. Another police officer said that Kapoor's manager and his family stayed with him in the three-storey building. He was rushed to All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) where the doctors declared him brought dead. The local police were informed, and they, along with forensic experts, visited the crime scene to collect the exhibits from the spot. Police said they are verifying and probing the matter from 'all possible angles' and will take legal action further as needed. In 2015, he was arrested from Uttarakhnad by the Economic Offences Wing (EOW) of the Delhi Police in two cases of cheating involving ₹9 crore. The first case involved a man, Satinder Nath Maira, who alleged that he had given ₹13 crore to Salil Kapoor's family friend Prashant Kapoor for investment. Salil had issued seven post-dated cheques when asked to return the money, but all were dishonoured. Continued on Page 8



Representative Image

Bestial cow vigilantes in Haryana arrested

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI/FARIDABAD

A 19-year-old boy, studying in Class 12 in Haryana's Faridabad, was allegedly chased in a car and shot dead by a group of five cow vigilantes who mistook him for a cattle smuggler. The victim was identified as Aryan Mishra. The members of vigilante group have been identified as Anil Kaushik, Varun, Krishna, Adesh, and Saurabh. A Duster car in which the boy, Aryan, and his friends Harshit and Shanky as well as two other women seated in the back of the vehicle, was chased by the members of cow vigilante group on the night of August 23 for about 30 kilometres near Haryana's Gadhपुरi on the Delhi-Agra National Highway. During interrogation, the accused revealed that on the night of August 23, they had received information that some suspected cattle smugglers driving two SUVs were doing recce in the city. They mistook the victim and his friends, Shanky and Harshit, for those cattle smugglers and followed their car, a senior police officer said. Continued on Page 8

Congress and AAP talk about Haryana Polls

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress and the Aam Aadmi Party have reached an 'in-principal understanding' to fight next month's Haryana Assembly election together against the wishes of its State unit, though nothing has been finalised yet. Sources said two rounds of talks between AAP MP Raghav Chadha and Congress's KC Venugopal have already been held. The third round of meeting can be held on Wednesday. Sources said the AAP is reported to have demanded 10 seats, while the Congress is willing to give between five and seven only. The Congress is reportedly also willing to give one seat to the Samajwadi Party. The deadline for nominations is October 4 with voting on October 5. Against the wishes of its State unit, the Congress on Tuesday said it is in talks with the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) for an alliance in Haryana though nothing has been finalised yet. According to sources, in its Central Election Committee (CEC) meeting on Monday evening, party leader Rahul Gandhi expressed interest in exploring the possibility of alliance with AAP for Assembly elections in Haryana. Ironically, the State Congress leaders in Haryana have rejected the possibility of any alliance with AAP in the State. Recently, senior



Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha and Congress MP Rahul Gandhi with party president Mallikarjun Kharge and party MP KC Venugopal during meeting with party secretaries and joint secretaries, in New Delhi, on Tuesday

PTI

Congress leader in Haryana, Kumari Selja ruled out the possibility of an alliance with AAP for the Assembly polls, saying her party is strong in the State and will fight the elections on its own. Asked about the possibility of an alliance with AAP, AICC general secretary in-charge of Haryana Deepak Babaria said, 'We are in talks with the AAP, but nothing has been finalised yet. As soon as something concrete emerges, we will inform you.' Responding to another question, Babaria said, 'We have to defeat the BJP, and therefore are against allowing anti-BJP votes to be divided.' Meanwhile, AAP leader and Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Singh has

welcomed reports claiming Rahul has shown interest in an alliance with Arvind Kejriwal-led party in poll-bound Haryana. Polling for 90 Assembly seats in Haryana will be held on October 5 and counting of votes will be undertaken on October 8. The Congress's Central Election Committee had met on Monday and cleared the names of 34 candidates for the Assembly polls in Haryana. 'Today, a meeting was held for Haryana by the CEC. A list of 49 names was presented by the State's screening committee, out of which 34 have been approved and decision on 15 is pending,' Babaria had said last evening. Continued on Page 8

Netflix questioned over Hindu code names for IC 814 hijackers

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Under pressure from the Government, Netflix India on Tuesday said it has included the real as well as the code names of the hijackers of the Indian Airlines aircraft in the web series 'IC814: The Kandahar Hijack'. This comes after Netflix India content head Monika Shergill on Tuesday met Information and Broadcasting Secretary Sanjay Jaju and assured to be 'sensitive' to India's sentiments. Information and Broadcasting Secretary Sanjay Jaju summoned the Netflix India's content head, Monika Shergill, to convey the government's strong disapproval of the depiction



of certain elements in the web series. The web series had triggered a row after a section of viewers objected to the humane projection of terrorists and reference to their Hindu code names, contending that distortion of real identities of hijackers

amounted to misrepresentation of historical events. 'For the benefit of audiences unfamiliar with the 1999 hijacking of Indian Airlines Flight 814, the opening disclaimer has been updated to include the real and code names of the hijackers,'

Shergill, Vice President, Content at Netflix India, said in a statement after meeting Jaju. She said the code names in the series reflect those used during the actual event. The real names of the hijackers were Ibrahim Athar, Shahid Akhtar Sayed, Sunny, Ahmad Qazi, Zahoor Mistry and Shakir. However, the series referred to the code names used by terrorists — Bhola, Shankar, Doctor, Burger and Chief. 'India has a rich culture of storytelling and we are committed to showcasing these stories and their authentic representation,' she said in the statement. The meeting at Jaju's office here lasted for about 40 minutes during which the OTT platform official was apprised of the sentiments expressed by a large section of the society and the need to be sensitive while handling such topics. According to sources, in the meeting, the Government posed tough questions, asking the Netflix India head why no captions or riders were issued to clearly display the real names of the hijackers. The Government also asked why the hijackers looked 'firm and sensitive' whereas the negotiators appeared 'weak and confused'. Continued on Page 8

we are committed to showcasing these stories and their authentic representation,' she said in the statement. The meeting at Jaju's office here lasted for about 40 minutes during which the OTT platform official was apprised of the sentiments expressed by a large section of the society and the need to be sensitive while handling such topics. According to sources, in the meeting, the Government posed tough questions, asking the Netflix India head why no captions or riders were issued to clearly display the real names of the hijackers. The Government also asked why the hijackers looked 'firm and sensitive' whereas the negotiators appeared 'weak and confused'. Continued on Page 8

Three crew members missing after Indian Coast Guard helicopter crash

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Three crew members of Indian Coast Guard are missing after their helicopter on a rescue mission had to make a forced landing at sea off Porbandar on Monday, Coast Guard said here on Tuesday. Rescue mission was on to locate them. Giving details, officials said the incident occurred on Monday night after the Coast Guard launched an operation around 11 pm to evacuate an injured crew member on board a tanker which was sailing close to Porbandar. While one of the four crew members on board the ICG's advanced light helicopter



(ALH) was rescued, a search operation was on for three others, it said. The force has deployed four ships and two aircraft to search and rescue the missing crew members. Coast Guard said aircraft wreckage was located. The incident happened whilst the helicopter was approaching the vessel for the evacuation, it added.



# Yogi hails bravery, alertness of soldiers

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Tuesday said it is the result of the alertness of the brave soldiers that despite adverse circumstances, India has been able to protect its borders with full strength and foil the biggest conspiracies. Addressing the inaugural function of the three-day Armed Forces Festival held at Surya Khel Parisar in the Lucknow Cantonment on Tuesday, Adityanath said the valour and courage of the soldiers are a source of assurance for 140 crore Indians. "It is the result of the alertness of the brave soldiers of India that today, despite adverse circumstances, India has been able to protect its borders with

full strength and foil the biggest conspiracies," he said. The chief minister said the Indian Army has not only made its enemies acknowledge its strength, discipline and technical capability, but also given its best performance in adverse circumstances. "All of us have seen a glimpse of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's integrated command, in which the three forces of land, air and water easily defeat the enemy and achieve victory through mutual coordination," the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader said. He added that "it is our good fortune that Uttar Pradesh is a land of heroes". "Youngsters from the state have made significant contributions in every war for the country's security. They have enhanced

the pride of the country and the state with their valour and courage," Adityanath said. He asserted that the state government is fully committed to the welfare of the serving and retired soldiers and Veer Naris. "Under Prime Minister Modi's leadership, India has moved forward rapidly in the last 10 years to achieve self-reliance in defence production," he said. At the Investors Summit held in Lucknow in February 2018, Modi had announced two defence industrial corridors in the country, the chief minister said, adding that one of those is being established in Uttar Pradesh. The state government has taken the work forward by establishing excellent coordination with the defence ministry, he said. Adityanath also said the work

on the BrahMos Manufacturing Centre (established by the Defence Research and Development Organisation and Bharat Dynamics Limited in Jhansi) is progressing rapidly. These projects will strengthen the country's military power, he said, adding that latest equipment and technology will be developed on Indian soil, making the armed forces even stronger. The defence corridor is also providing employment opportunities to the people of Uttar Pradesh on a large scale, the chief minister said. According to a statement issued by the PIB Defence Wing, an audience of more than 8,000 witnessed a magnificent display of latest military equipment, such as tanks, helicopters, artillery guns etc., developed as

part of Aatmanirbhar Bharat and showcasing the might of the technology-driven Indian armed forces. The notable exhibits included the T-90 tank (the main battle tank of the Army), the K-9 Vajra self-propelled artillery gun, weapon locating radar (WLR) Swathi and a static display of ALH and LCH Prachand helicopters. The live displays showcased the capabilities of the state-of-the-art equipment. Para drop and combat demonstrations by Special Forces, extraction of troops by helicopters, para motors, a horse-and-dog show and many such captivating live displays were key attractions of the event. The Indian Navy's band played marshal tunes to enthral the spectators.

**CLASSIFIED**

**NOTICE**

I am Army Number 1602 6448 Alpha Nayak Jitendra Singh Son Rajendra Kumar Singh Village Dandupur Post Sarai Rawat Tehsil Haidergarh District Barabanki in my Army Record My Father's Name is recorded as Rajendra which is wrong which has been changed to Rajendra Kumar Singh which will give here Same name in future go from

**NOTICE**

I Sanphung Basumatary S/O Basanta Basumatary Army No.15733599 X-LNK R /O- Rong Rong Para . Post- Kush Dhowa, Distt-Goalpara State- Assam- Pin-783124 Present Address-146 IBSC, 4 IDSR C/O 56 APO, declared that in my service record Wife's name wrongly recorded as Rima Basumatary, where as her correct name is Rima Brahma supported with affidavit.

**NOTICE**

In my educational and service records, my name is mentioned as Ramnath whereas in Aadhaar card and other documents, it is mentioned as Ramnath Verma. Both the names are of same person and indeed correct. Ramnath Verma, Shyam Nagar Mandi Samiti, Pukhrayan, Kanpur Dehat.

**NOTICE**

I have changed my name from Matin To Abdul Matin S/o Abdul Gaffar R/o Sayyed Compound, Paschim Gangaghat, Shuklaganj Unnao for all future purpose.

**NOTICE**

This is to inform the General Public that my clients ANANT KUMAR RAJAPAL, VIRENDRA KUMAR DUBEY, SMT. TAPINDER KAUR CHHABRA, SMT. ANJALI UPADHYAY are owner of the property municipal No. 74/008(74/004A) Vijay Nagar, Ward-Ganshanganj, Lucknow. Earlier these three people had been the owners of this property name of Charanjeet Singh, Aagya Kaur, Sardar Nanak Singh, there after property owners Late Charanjeet Singh, Late Aagya Kaur, Late Sardar Nanak Singh expired. If any person have any kind of Right, Title, Interest claim, share etc. than please communicate the same with 7 day to the CK Legal Associates, Lucknow on 0552-4077776 or SMFG India Home Finance Company Ltd. Otherwise the same will be considered void.

**NOTICE**

I, Dilip Kumar Singh s/o Lt. Prabhu Dayal Singh R/o C-402, Indira Nagar, Lucknow do hereby declare that two Original (Sale Deed) dated 10.07.1996 Sr. No. 4283 in name of Deepak Kumar Yadav and dated 17.04.1995 Sr. No. 2194 in name of Deepak Kumar Yadav is lost. The address of the property is C-402, Indira Nagar, Lucknow. I further state that I wish to create Equitable Mortgage on the said property for loan from SBI Indira Nagar, Lucknow. An FIR has been lodged with the police in respect of lost (Sale Deed) vide FIR No. 20240000564812 dated 04.07.2024. If anyone has any objection, kindly contact above mentioned branch of SBI.

**NOTICE**

It is to inform general public that Original Sale Deed Dated 22.03.2006 executed by Rani Sahakari Grah Nirman Samiti Ltd through Secretary Rajendra Kumar in favour of Anoop Singh in respect of Plot No.20 having area 1500 Sq.Ft. Part of Khasra no 97, situated at Village Uttarahauna, Paragana Tehsil and District Lucknow, registered in the office of Sub Registrar II, Lucknow, in Book No.1, Volume 5618, Pages 49-68, at Serial No.2342, on 22.03.2006 and Original Sale Deed Dated 06.06.2008 executed by Anoop Singh in favour of Smt. Sanjay Singh registered in the office of Sub Registrar II, Lucknow, in Book No.1, Volume 7540, Pages 345-366, at Serial No.5506, on 06.06.2008 now owned by Murali Chaubey, has been lost by him at Mahmudabad Chauraha, Sitapur, U.P., on 01.09.2024 at 5 PM-6 PM while going to Mahmudabad Chauraha for getting its photocopy from his residential place. Now, Murali Chaubey is mortgaging said property with Muthoot Homefin (India) Ltd. (MHIL) against loan. Use of this sale deed by any other person will be void. If any person or financial institution has find them or has any interest or objection in this regard, please contact to Advocate mentioned below with objection in writing and with relevant documents, within 7 days from the date of publication of this notice. Mr. Amit Kumar Singh Rathour Advocate, Chamber No. 7, UGF, Krishna Tower, Chakbast Road, Quaiserbagh, Lucknow. Mobile No. 9559811119

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## Police rescue two youths kidnapped by gang linked to Mahadev scam app

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

In a military-like operation, the Sushant Golf City police rescued two youths who had been kidnapped by a gang linked to the Mahadev gaming app scam. The victims were held hostage in a flat in the area on Tuesday. According to Gosainganj ACP Kiran Yadav, the police arrested eight suspects during the raid and rescued the victims — Ankit Kumar Patel and his friend Aneesh Kumar Singh, both from Durg, Chhattisgarh. Those arrested are also from Chhattisgarh and are believed to have defrauded numerous people under the guise of investment. They have been identified as Raja Khan (student) Sailaab Diwan (student) Aman Singh (student), Sujwai (student), Raj Narayan Pal (teacher), Maheshwar Vishwakarma (cook), Jitendra Sahu (student), and Sachin Kumar Shah (cook). The police recovered 18 mobile phones and other electronic devices, including computers, from the suspects. On September 2, Pawan Kumar Patel from Pratapgarh reported to the Sushant Golf City police station that his cousin Ankit Patel, and latter's friend Aneesh Kumar Singh had been kidnapped. The victims had been lured to Prayagraj by an acquaintance named Avinash Mishra under the pretense of computer-related work. Upon arrival in Prayagraj, four individuals in a Thar

## Transporter held hostage, tortured

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A transporter was abducted by some SUV-borne youths near Lok Bandhu crossing in Ashiyana. The victim, Sunil Yadav of Nagina Market in Indiranagar, was held hostage in a factory for 24 hours and subjected to torture, police said on Tuesday. According to the police, the abduction was motivated by a financial dispute between the victim and the accused, who sought to recover money through the crime. However, Sunil Yadav has denied any such dispute, claiming there was no financial conflict with the abductors. The abductors extorted Rs 50,000 from Sunil's wife by threatening to kill him. They

also reportedly forced her to hand over her jewellery as part of the extortion. After receiving the money and jewellery, the perpetrators released Sunil. He filed an FIR on Sunday, and the police are currently investigating the case. Sunil Yadav stated that on August 26, he was returning home from Ashiyana at around 10:30 pm when the SUV overtook his car. The occupants pulled him out of his vehicle, forced him into their SUV, and drove him to a bakery factory where they held him captive and assaulted him. On August 27 morning, the kidnappers sent an accomplice to Sunil's house to demand the extortion money. The accomplice threatened Sunil's wife Manju with the

death of her husband if the money was not paid. Terrified, she complied, handing over the money and her jewellery, including a gold chain, bracelet, and ring. She did not report the incident to the police immediately due to fear. The police have registered an FIR under various sections, including assault, kidnapping, hostage-taking, beating, and extortion. They have indicated that the initial investigation points to a financial dispute, but further investigation is ongoing. Action will be taken based on the evidence gathered. Sunil, who sustained injuries to his head and leg, initially sought medical treatment, which caused a delay in reporting the crime to the police.

## Rajnath Singh to take part in JCC on September 4

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Defence Minister and Lucknow MP will arrive on a three-day visit to the state capital on Wednesday. On Thursday he will participate in the Joint Commanders' Conference (JCC), which will be held over two days for the first time from September 4. Singh is scheduled to reach out to the top brass of the tri-services over 'how to make the country more strong and secure' at a time when global conflicts are threatening to spread across other regions as well. This is a follow-up to the Combined Commanders' Conference presided over by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Bhopal in March 2023, which will take place once in two years. The conference, carrying the theme 'Sashakt aur Surakshit' Bharat: Transforming the Armed Forces', is in line with the government's move to enable the joint working of the tri-services, which will help the armed forces operate through identified theatre commands. The first day of the JCC will be addressed by Chief of Defence Staff General Anil Chauhan, who is expected to talk about how the wars of the future will be fought and the Indian armed forces' response

to the security challenges through the period of transformation into theatre commands. On the last day, Rajnath Singh will speak to the commanders from the Army, the Air Force and the Navy on the security challenges confronted by the country and share his vision with the forces on ways to tackle them. Presentations will also be made by the different directorates of the defence forces, including operations, during the conference. Besides, it will also have a session on the different Make-in-India initiatives in the forces and the progress made by the services.

## Thief makes off with jewellery, leaves behind slippers for branded shoes

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A theft incident left the police baffled after CCTV footage revealed the thief swapping his slippers for a pair of branded shoes belonging to the homeowner in Basant Vihar, Chinhat. The incident, which occurred at around 3 am on Tuesday, shows the thief scaling the wall and sneaking into the house. Once inside, he searched the premises quietly, taking jewellery valued at Rs 10 lakh and Rs 1.5 lakh in cash from a cupboard locker. As he was about to leave, the thief's attention was drawn to a pair of branded shoes. He removed his own

slippers and put on the shoes before escaping. When an elderly woman in the house woke up, the thief managed to dodge her and flee the scene. The entire theft, amounting to Rs 11.5 lakh, was captured on CCTV. The thief spent about an hour and a half inside the house, moving through various rooms and gathering valuables. After filling his bag with eight gold rings, two gold mangalsutras, four gold chains, eight earrings, and silver anklets, he eventually noticed the branded shoes. After changing into them, he exited the house around 4:30 am. Ritesh Singh, the home-

owner, who runs a pharma company, reported that the thief gained entry because the door was left open. Singh and his family were asleep in another part of the house at the time. When his mother got up to drink water and approached the room, she mistook the thief for Ritesh and asked him to open the door. The thief responded by claiming Ritesh had called him and, when the woman tried to raise an alarm, he swiftly evaded her and exited the house. The Chinhat police have registered a complaint regarding the incident and are investigating the case.

## UP cities shine in Swachh Vayu Survekshan-2024

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Ministry of Environment, Forest, and Climate Change has announced the results of Swachh Vayu Survekshan-2024, recognising notable achievements in air quality management across several cities in Uttar Pradesh. This annual survey, conducted under the National Clean Air Programme (NCAP), assesses cities based on their progress in improving air quality. Agra has earned the third position among cities with populations over 10 lakh, reflecting its significant advancements in air quality management. Key initiatives contributing to this ranking

include the adoption of advanced pollution control technologies, extensive plantation drives, and strict vehicular emission regulations. In the category of cities with populations between 3 to 10 lakh, Firozabad has achieved first place due to its exceptional efforts in reducing air pollution. The city's success is attributed to its implementation of green energy solutions and effective waste management practices, setting a high standard for others. Jhansi has also excelled, securing the third position in the same population category. The city's commitment to controlling industrial emissions and enhancing urban green spaces has played a crucial role in its improved air

quality. Rae Bareilly has been awarded first place in the category for cities with populations below 3 lakh. The city's proactive strategies, including promoting public transportation, increasing green cover, and community-driven environmental programmes, have led to a notable reduction in pollution levels. The Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) evaluated the self-assessment reports of 131 cities for the fiscal year 2023-24, following the guidelines issued on August 10, 2022. The comprehensive results will be revealed during Swachh Vayu Diwas 2024, scheduled for September 7, at the Jaipur Exhibition and Convention Centre in Jaipur, Rajasthan.

## Rahul gifts raw material to Sultanpur cobbler

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Leader of Opposition and Rae Bareilly MP Rahul Gandhi has once again sent a gift to Chetram, a cobbler from Sultanpur. This time goods worth lakhs have been sent by Rahul. Chetram, who operates a small shop in Vidhayak Nagar, Guptarganj town, Kurebhar development block, saw a stroke of good fortune on July 26 last when Rahul Gandhi visited him while returning from a court appearance. For the second time this month, Rahul Gandhi's team arrived at Chetram's shop on Monday with raw materials worth lakhs for making shoes and slippers.

Previously, Chetram had received similar raw materials. Overjoyed by Rahul's gift, Chetram shared that he received a call at 11 pm on Sunday informing him that Rahul Gandhi's team would deliver goods to him the following day at 11 am. Unable to contain his excitement, Chetram eagerly awaited the delivery. He even displayed a photo of himself and his son with Rahul Gandhi at his shop. Around 2 pm on Monday, a vehicle accompanied by a police escort reached Chetram's shop. The team members, identifying themselves as part of Rahul Gandhi's team, delivered four cartons filled with essential materials for shoe-making, including thread, glue, leather,

rexine, shoe soles, and more. This contribution will significantly help Chetram expand his business, enabling him to produce footwear for both men and women. It is notable that on July 26, while in Sultanpur for a court case related to Amit Shah's defamation suit, Rahul Gandhi had met Chetram at his kiosk. During the visit, Rahul Gandhi observed Chetram's shoe-making process, personally stitched a slipper, and glued a shoe. Despite the value of the shoes and slippers he made—estimated at up to Rs 10 lakh—Chetram chose not to sell them. Subsequently, Rahul Gandhi's team sent him a shoe-stitching machine to help advance his business.

## Docs remove 1.5kg tumour from infant

Lucknow (PNS): KGMU doctors successfully removed a 1.5 kg tumour from an infant's abdomen. The 3-month-old girl from Patanala area in Chowk had a huge lump in abdomen since birth. The mass was gradually increasing. The patient's attendants were referred to KGMU where they consulted Dr JD Rawat and Dr Anand Pandey. After evaluation, the doctors advised surgery to remove the lump. The infant was operated on August 21. Dr Anand said that it was a tricky surgery as the tumour was very large. "It was also pushing all the organs inside the abdomen. Any error would have risked the life of the baby. The operation lasted over two hours and the mass was removed. The mass was closely related to the large blood vessels of the abdomen," he said.

## Case registered in boy's death due to electrocution

Lucknow (PNS): The Gudamba police have registered an FIR under the charge of culpable homicide following the death of a 15-year-old boy due to an electric shock in a local park. The complaint was filed late Tuesday evening by the victim's family against the Lucknow Municipal Corporation. SHO (Gudamba) Nitish Kumar Srivastava confirmed that the case was registered under Section 106 of the BNS code. In his complaint, Rajesh Kumar, the victim's father, alleged that the LMC was negligent in addressing a hazardous condition. "The high-mast pole from which my son received the electric shock had been carrying current for several days. Despite notifying the LMC about the dangerous condition, the

issue was not addressed. This negligence on part of the engineers of the road lighting department and the employees and officers of the private company EECL resulted in my son's death," Rajesh Kumar stated in the FIR. The tragic incident occurred on Sunday when Abhishek Kumar Gautam (15) was electrocuted after coming into contact with a high-mast light pole at Gayatri Park in Gudamba. According to Rajesh Kumar, Abhishek was out for a morning walk and exercise when the incident happened around 5:30 am. The current flowing through the pole caused his immediate death. Rajesh Kumar, who supports his family by operating a vegetable cart, resides in a rented house with his family.

## CITY BRIEFS



**MOU SIGNED**

A memorandum of understanding (MoU) was signed by principal of Navjy Kanya Mahavidyalaya Prof Manjula Upadhyay with an NGO, that is working with youth to improve employment outcomes. It provides skills training, career counselling

**AWARDED**

The National Bureau of Fish Genetic Resources in Lucknow has received the 'National Award for e-Governance 2024' for the National Surveillance Programme for Aquatic Animal Diseases (NSPAAD) - Establishment of e-Governance in Aquatic Animal Disease Management System by the Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances, Government of India. The award carries a value of Rs 5 lakh and citation. The award was presented on Tuesday during the 27th National Conference on e-Governance held at the Jio Convention Centre in Mumbai. Chief Minister of Maharashtra, Eknath Shinde and Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis did the honours.

**Recruitment for Various Positions**  
(Teaching-SRD and Non-Teaching) at IIM Ranchi  
IIM Ranchi, invites applications for various Teaching-SRD and Non-Teaching positions.  
For further details regarding eligibility and application process please visit the website-  
<https://iimranchi.ac.in/>  
Last date for receiving online application is 23 September 2024.

**Rajdhani Nagar Sahkari Bank Ltd.**  
AO: Sai Tower CP-42, Sector-E, Slapur Road  
Yojna, Ring Road, Jankipuram, Lucknow.

**CORRIGENDUM**  
With reference to E-Auction Sale Notice published on 02.09.2024, wherein Dr. Shailesh Shrivastava (Borrower & Mortgagor) D/o Sri Marachuram Reserve price & EMD of E-Auction were erroneously published as Reserve Price: Rs. 5,50,000/- & EMD Price: Rs. 55,000/- Now, Reserve price & EMD of E-Auction should be considered and read as Reserve Price: Rs. 5,00,000/- & EMD Price: Rs. 50,000/-. Other terms & conditions will remain the same.

BJP MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

Yogi: Must reach out to every individual

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Tuesday asked the Bharatiya Janata Party cadres to enrol maximum number of general and active members.

"People hold the BJP in high esteem and we must reach out to every individual," Yogi said while participating in the 'BJP Sadasyata Abhiyan 2024' on Tuesday.

Addressing party workers, the chief minister said: "Across the length and breadth of India, every person who cherishes this nation's soil aspires to be part of the BJP. When we don't connect with them, they feel a deep sense of disappointment. This is when they become susceptible to divisive ideologies that prey on caste, regional, and linguistic differences, threatening to unravel India's social fabric and undermine its unity and integrity." "In such situations, we must reach out to every individual who is waiting for us. Our goal should be singular, as expressed in the line 'Ram kaju kihene bin mohi kahan vishram...' (I find no peace, until I serve Ram)," he added.

Earlier, Yogi also joined the BJP as a member by dialling the toll-free number. "We are privileged to join the BJP, the world's largest political party. The BJP is unique as the only cadre-based party. It operates with a sense of national supremacy, deeply connected to India's heritage, and represents the nation's great leaders and its very



Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath with Deputy Chief Ministers Brijesh Pathak and Keshav Prasad Maurya and state BJP president Bhupendra Singh Chaudhary during BJP's membership renewal drive in Lucknow on Tuesday

essence," the chief minister said. "The BJP has not only established a strong presence across the country but has also become inclusive, successfully engaging every segment of society in its mission," he added. Yogi also noted that in independent India, the BJP is the only party whose national president resigned from his position due to concerns that the then-government was threatening the nation's sovereignty. Dr Shyama Prasad Mukherjee's sacrifice regarding Kashmir exemplifies this dedication, he pointed out. Giving the 'nation first' mantra, Yogi stated that every BJP worker can affirm

that the country holds greater importance to them than the party itself. He recalled that in 1977, when the Congress had undermined democracy, the Bharatiya Jana Sangh was dissolved, and an alliance of opposition parties formed the Janata Party. The Janata Party's leadership focused on preserving the nation's democracy, he noted. "Similarly, under the guidance of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the leadership of party president JP Nadda, the BJP demonstrated its commitment by launching the 'Seva Hi Sangathan Hai' campaign. This initiative aimed to safeguard 140 crore Indians during the COVID-19 pandem-

ic, reflecting their dedication despite personal risks," Yogi recalled. The chief minister urged party workers to reach out to every individual who may be waiting for them. "If we visit the homes of beneficiaries of the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana, take a selfie with them, and use the same mobile to enrol them as members, it will make them feel valued," he said. Yogi emphasised the need to connect with those who have received Ayushman Bharat cards, the 15 crore residents benefiting from free rations over the past four years, those using Ujjwala Yojana cylinders, individuals with new electricity connections, ben-

eficiaries of the Prime Minister Kisan Samman Nidhi, and the 6.5 lakh youths who have secured government jobs.

Referring to the government's initiative to engage youth with employment opportunities, Yogi highlighted that the recruitment process for 60,200 police personnel has been successfully advanced, with an additional 40,000 positions set to be filled soon. He added that the government plans to create two lakh government jobs over the next two years and one crore jobs in the private sector. Furthermore, the government aims to assist approximately 60 lakh young people and entrepreneurs in launching new startups and becoming entrepreneurs.

He stated that whether it involves public welfare programs, employment opportunities in government or the private sector, security issues, or extending infrastructure and development programmes to every household, making the Bharatiya Janata Party more accessible will help dispel any doubts caused by those spreading misinformation. "We need to connect with people, foster a sense of belonging, and use this membership campaign as a valuable opportunity. By participating, the BJP will reaffirm its leading role, not only globally but also within Uttar Pradesh, through the largest membership campaign."

Every job was auctioned during SP rule, says CM



Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath during a programme to lay the foundation stone of various projects, distribute loans to self-help groups and distribute tablets and smartphones to youths in Mainpuri on Tuesday.

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Tuesday attacked the Samajwadi Party, saying anarchy and hooliganism are ingrained in its DNA and it has torn apart the social fabric and created an identity crisis for the people. After inaugurating and laying the foundation stones of 379 development projects worth more than ₹361 crore in the premises of AK Inter College located in Karhal of Mainpuri district, he also alleged that every job in the state was auctioned during SP's rule. Karhal assembly seat has fallen vacant due to the resignation of SP president Akhilesh Yadav after being elected MP from Kannauj. By-election is to be held on this seat.

Adityanath, in his address, targeted the SP and said, "I want to ask why Mainpuri, which was once considered a VVIP district, lagged behind in development work? Who were the people who made it face an identity crisis?" He added, "You must have seen their (SP) 'kaaname' (deeds). Their 'kaaname' is the same that was done by a Samajwadi Party leader with a Nishad daughter in Ayodhya. This is their face. If you want to see their real 'kaaname', the incident that happened in Kannauj is the 'Nawab brand' and the real face of the

Samajwadi Party." In Kannauj, Nawab Singh Yadav, who was once associated with the SP, was arrested for raping a teenager. "These are the same people who created an identity crisis, tearing apart the social fabric. Anarchy and hooliganism are part of their DNA. Their model is not of development but of loot. They looted the money that should have been spent for development and welfare of poor. 'Dacoity' was committed in the jobs that were to be given to the youth," Yogi alleged. Attacking Akhilesh Yadav and his uncle Shivpal Singh Yadav without taking their names, he said, "Before 2017, every job was for sale. It was auctioned. 'Chacha' and 'Bhatija' were equal partners in the extortion. Later when more extortion was to be made, 'Chacha' was pushed away and the nephew ran away alone with the bag (of money). This was the scene in the entire state."

He also accused the Samajwadi Party of stopping the celebration of Janmashtami in the past, saying, "When the SP was in power, it had banned the celebration of Janmashtami because some people were troubled by the announcement of Lord Krishna's name on Janmashtami." "When I came to power in 2017, I said that there is only one event which takes place in jails, police stations and police lines. Organise it with great pomp and show. Today, Janmashtami is organised with full grandeur in all 1585 police stations and all prisons of the state," he said. "You are once again getting the gift of projects worth ₹375 crore, especially the people of Karhal assembly constituency," he said. On the occasion, Yogi distributed loans worth over ₹8 crore to 135 self-help groups. Also, smartphones and tablets were distributed to more than 500 students.

'BJP membership drive propaganda to mislead public'

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Uttar Pradesh Congress president Ajay Rai on Tuesday hit out at the Bharatiya Janata Party's ongoing membership drive, dismissing it as "propaganda to mislead the public." Speaking on the 119th birth anniversary of former Union minister Pandit Kamalapati Tripathi, Rai questioned the need for the campaign, saying, "If a person is already a member of a party, why would they take membership again? This is just propaganda to mislead the public." Paying tributes to

Pandit Kamalapati Tripathi, Rai called him an inspiration. "Pandit Kamalapati Tripathi is an inspiration for all of us, and Kashiwasis have always received his love and blessings. We are proud to be celebrating his 119th birth anniversary today. On this occasion, we take an oath to eradicate 'nafrat ki raajneeti' (politics of hatred), following the footsteps of Kamalapati Tripathi," Rai stated. Reacting to Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's remarks about saints not being greedy, the UP Congress chief said: "Of course, we consider saints as great



men, and those who wear saffron are revered. However, Yogi Adityanath and some peo-

ple in the BJP wear saffron and lie blatantly. The respect people had towards saints has changed because of these individuals." He also welcomed the Supreme Court's recent decision on "bulldozer justice" and criticised the BJP governments for demolishing homes without legal justification. "We welcome the Supreme Court's decision on 'bulldozer justice'. People's homes are being demolished not just in Uttar Pradesh but also in neighbouring states. It is totally unacceptable if the BJP demolishes someone's home

without a proper rule or law," the Congress leader said. Speaking on the BHU rape case, Rai condemned the BJP, highlighting that the accused were not only granted bail but were also welcomed with garlands. "This is unfortunate. The BJP is only encouraging the rapists by doing so," he said. Regarding the Kannauj rape case, Rai called for a thorough investigation. "Whoever has committed any crime should be investigated, and action should be taken against that individual," he said.

Wolves strike again, attack 7-yr-old girl

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Another attack by wolves occurred in Bahraich district on Monday night, this time targeting a seven-year-old girl. The girl, Afsana, was attacked at around 11:45 pm while she and her mother were sleeping in their courtyard in Giridharpurva village, Mahsi tehsil. Luckily though, Afsana's mother managed to intervene, and the girl escaped with minor injuries. Forest officials confirmed that the pug marks found at the scene belonged to a wolf. In response to the increasing danger posed by these wolves, the Forest department has issued orders for their elimination. Chief Wildlife Warden and PCCF (Wildlife) Sanjay Srivastava stated, "Given that the wolves have become man-eaters and pose a serious threat to human life, we have issued orders for their elimination. Such measures are taken when an animal becomes a danger to human lives." When asked about the possibility of employing external shooters, Srivastava

mentioned that the department has its own internal team for this task. New teams have been deployed to Bahraich and are actively searching for the wolves. Joint patrolling with local villagers is underway to ensure community safety. The Forest department has divided the affected area into four sectors, each managed by a DFO or SDO. Each sector will have five teams: three working at night and two during the day, equipped with drone cameras and command centres for day and night operations. Wolf expert YV Jhala, formerly with the Wildlife Institute of India, has offered his expertise to the Forest department. Jhala believes that the attacks are the work of a single wolf rather than a pack. "If a pack is responsible, there would be more evidence of consumption, such as only skulls and bones remaining," he explained. Jhala suggested that the lone wolf could be a 3-4 year old individual, possibly one that was previously held captive and has lost its fear of humans.

Such wolves, having grown up with humans and lacking hunting skills for wild prey, can become extremely dangerous. Jhala noted that this type of behaviour is rare and has not been observed for the past 30 years. He expressed surprise that the Forest department managed to capture four wolves, as hungry wolves typically enter traps only out of desperation. However, he did not attribute the wolves' behaviour to recent rains, explaining that wolves generally enter dens only during the breeding season and that pups, not adults, remain in dens. The expert pointed out that wolves consume 5-8 kg of flesh in one go and, if unable to feed adequately, may seek additional kills. This explains why the attacking wolf does not return to previous kills if it is being chased by people. In the past 45 days, there have been eight fatalities and over 30 injuries due to wolf attacks. The Forest department continues to search for the responsible wolves, working tirelessly to address this ongoing threat.

Grape cultivation now becoming a reality in UP

Lucknow (PNS): Grape cultivation is no longer confined to Nasik; it is now becoming a reality in Uttar Pradesh as well under the leadership of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath. Residents are successfully growing grapes in their kitchen gardens and farms demonstrating that with the right variety and expert guidance, grape cultivation is not difficult. To ensure successful grape production, selecting the appropriate variety and proper pruning at the right time are essential. One popular variety, 'Flame Seedless', has been identified as particularly well-suited for Uttar Pradesh. This discovery was made after extensive trials conducted by the Central Institute for Subtropical Horticulture, which is part of the Indian Agricultural Research Institute. By planting grapes in their gardens or fields, residents can enjoy the fruit's natural sweetness and medicinal benefits after just a few years. The local production of fresh grapes will also lead to better pricing, benefitting both consumers and farmers.

Maya welcomes SC warning to states on 'bulldozer justice'

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

In line with the Supreme Court's statement that the properties of accused, even if they are convicted, cannot be demolished, Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) president Mayawati on Tuesday said family members should not be punished for the crimes committed by criminals. Mayawati posted that action against criminal elements in the country should be taken under the law and their family and close ones should not be punished. "All this has been shown by our party's erstwhile government by establishing the rule of law by law. Bulldozers should also be used as per the decision of the Hon'ble Supreme Court. However, it would be appropriate that there is no need to use it because criminal elements can also be dealt with under strict laws," Mayawati posted on X. Mayawati wrote that instead of using bulldozers on the family and close ones of criminal elements, strict action should be taken against the officials, who, in collusion with



such elements, do not give proper justice to the victims. "All governments must pay attention to this," she said. On Monday, the Supreme Court had criticised the increasing trend of demolishing the houses or properties of the accused of crimes. The apex court commented and called it a case of "bulldozer justice". The top court announced that it would issue guidelines to resolve the issue. On Monday, the Supreme Court expressed strong displeasure over the bulldozer action being taken by various state governments. While hearing a petition, the Supreme Court asked, "Can anyone destroy anyone's house

just because he is an accused?" The Supreme Court said that even if an accused is found guilty, his house cannot be demolished without a fixed law. "Even the house of the culprit cannot be demolished," the Supreme Court noted. Meanwhile, Mayawati also appealed to the government in connection with the agitation of 69,000 teachers' recruitment candidates in the state who surrounded the residence of Union Minister Anupriya Patel and Minister Ashish Patel. Through a post on X, Mayawati urged the Yogi government to follow the orders of the High Court and issue appointment letters to the candidates of 69,000 teachers' recruitment. She said that the government had earlier assured the teachers that appointment letters would be issued as per the order of the High Court but till now, this assurance has not been fulfilled, due to which injustice is being done to the candidates. Mayawati appealed to the government to pay immediate attention to the issue and take necessary steps.

Over 11 lakh receive loans under PM Mudra Yojana

Lucknow (PNS): The Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana is benefiting a large number of people in Uttar Pradesh significantly, owing to Uttar Pradesh government's efforts to ensure that the Central government's schemes reach every eligible citizen in the state. Till June 2024, in the financial year 2024-25, over 11 lakh people have received loans totalling approximately ₹11,000 crore, an official spokesman of the government claimed here on Tuesday evening. "These loans have been provided through various banks and non-banking financial companies (NBFCs) operating in the state. To maximise the scheme's impact, the Yogi government is actively coordinating with banks and conducting regular reviews to ensure that loans are easily accessible to every eligible person," he said. Notably, the Modi government launched the Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana to foster entrepreneurship across the country.

Four-day Deepotsav promises to be a grand spectacle

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Uttar Pradesh government led by Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath is gearing up to take Ayodhya's radiant splendour to new heights during the upcoming four-day 2024 Deepotsav celebrations from October 28 to 31. In a grand and spectacular display of devotion and festivity, more than 25 lakh diyas will illuminate various ghats, including Ram Ki Paidi and Naya Ghat. The intricate lighting arrangements will envelop Ayodhya Dham in a mystical aura reminiscent of Saket Dham. This year's Deepotsav holds special significance, as it marks the first celebration following the inauguration of the Ram Lalla Temple. Yogi's vision for the 8th Deepotsav is to make it the most magnificent to date, building on the tradition started in 2017 when the Saryu Ghat was adorned with record-breaking numbers of lamps. The Yogi government is leaving no stone unturned to ensure this Deepotsav is an unforgettable and grand celebration, reflecting the glorious spiritu-

al and cultural heritage of Ayodhya. This year's Deepotsav in Ayodhya will be marked by stunning modern lighting and artistic installations that will transform the city into a visual glory. The celebration will feature intelligent dynamic colour-changing LED panels and multimedia projections that will adorn not only the main venues but also various locations throughout Ayodhya. Welcome gates, designed with thematic lighted arc pillars, will greet visitors at Ram Ki Paidi and Naya Ghat.

Key pathways, including the Bhakti Path, will be illuminated with attractive lighting and floral decorations. Additionally, the Gonda Bridge on the route from Ayodhya to Gonda and the Basti Bridge on the route from Ayodhya to Basti will be lit up, creating a breathtaking spectacle. The entire Ayodhya Dham, including all major temples, will be adorned with special artistic decorations, with lighting taking centre stage. Over 500 significant sites in the city will feature eye-catching signage boards, and 20 artistic

installations will be placed throughout Ayodhya to enhance the festive atmosphere during the Deepotsav celebration. Diverse range of cultural programmes will be organised everyday during the Deepotsav festivities. Cultural programmes will be organised in multiple shifts each day, with the main event lasting 45 minutes. Over 100 artistes will perform at Ram Ki Paidi and other key venues, bringing to life various episodes from the life of Lord Ram. The main programme will also

feature a breathtaking laser show, multimedia projections, and a choreographed firecracker display. The highlight will be an environmentally friendly green aerial firecracker show that will illuminate the Ayodhya sky for over 10 minutes, filling it with vibrant colours and lights. This year's Deepotsav in Ayodhya will not only celebrate the rich cultural heritage of India but will also draw inspiration from grand traditions across the globe. A magnificent procession will be a key highlight, featuring seven large mechanised

tableaux, including the iconic 'Ram Rath'. These tableaux, depicting various episodes from the life of Lord Ram, will be inspired by famous festivals from Ororo (Bolivia), Basel (Switzerland), Salvador (Brazil), Barranquilla (Colombia), Dusseldorf (Germany), and the Grenadines. In a unique blend of tradition and technology, the Deepotsav will also introduce a virtual reality platform that offers immersive experiences of Ayodhya's sacred sites. Pilgrims and visitors will be able to virtually explore promi-

nent locations such as Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Temple, Hanuman Garhi Temple, Nageshwar Nath Temple, Ram Ki Paidi, and many others. Efforts are already underway by the Uttar Pradesh Tourism Department and the Ayodhya Development Authority to complete these projects. The ongoing work includes agency allocation and construction, ensuring that the Deepotsav will be a blend of spiritual grandeur and modern innovation, offering both physical and virtual experiences to devotees and visitors alike.

36TH CONVOCATION OF CHAUDHARY CHARAN SINGH UNIVERSITY

# Guv's concern over falling standard of education

CORRESPONDENT ■ MEEPLUT

Uttar Pradesh Governor and Chancellor Anandiben Patel while addressing the 36th convocation of Chaudhary Charan Singh University (CCSU) here on Tuesday said India has been a glorious country. At one time foreigners also came here and acquired education and culture, but today, on the contrary, Indian talents are going abroad to acquire education, which is not a good sign. Expressing concern over the falling standard of education in the country, Patel said that today only 26 per cent of students are able to access higher education. She said by 2030, its average should reach at least 50 per cent only then we will be able to achieve the goal of the New Education Policy (NEP). She appealed to the degree holder students in the ceremony to make their parents aware of literacy. She said educating everyone is the foundation stone of any country.

On the occasion the Governor expressed happiness over the increasing percentage of girl students in education and said that today 82 per cent of them have become medal and degree holders. She appealed to the degree holder students not to get into the trap of government jobs and focus on self-employment, recognise their skills and move towards development. She said that seven universities of Uttar Pradesh have



Uttar Pradesh Governor Anandiben Patel at the 36th convocation of Chaudhary Charan Singh University (CCSU) in Meerut on Tuesday

received a grant of ₹700 crore from the Centre after getting A-plus-plus grade from NAAC. Every section of the society should be encouraged for good work. She enumerated the budget schemes of the Central Government for skill development. The Governor said that now DigLocker has been installed in all the universities

of the state. Now students will not need to come to the university to get their degrees and mark sheets and will be able to get them at their home from DigLocker. The chief guest of the function, CSIR Director General Dr N Kalaiselvi said parents and gurus play an important role in life. Therefore, always respect them

and called upon the students to give priority to nationalism. Dr Kalaiselvi called upon the students to contribute to bring India in the category of developed countries by 2047 and added that the future of the country is in the hands of the youth.

On the occasion the Governor awarded the Chancellor's Gold Medal to Chanchal Sharma and Akash Pradhan, students of Science Faculty, for securing the highest marks in the year

for securing the highest marks in the MPÉd 2024 examination.

On the occasion Vice-Chancellor (V-C) Prof Sangeeta Shukla welcomed the guests and presented the progress report of the university. The programme was conducted by Registrar Dharendra Kumar.

Prof Sanjeev Kumar Sharma, Rajya Sabha MP Dr Laxmikant Bajpai, Baghat MP Dr Rajkumar Sangwan, Sardhana MLA Atul Pradhan,



Students jubilate during the convocation of Chaudhary Charan Singh University

2024 examination. Apart from this, Dr Shankar Dayal Sharma Gold Medal was given to Nikki Walian, a student of Education Faculty,

former MP Rajendra Agarwal along with the members of the Executive Council of the university and dignitaries were present on the occasion.

# Kashi's initiative 'Lab Mitra' awarded National e-Governance Gold Award

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Kashi's initiative 'Lab Mitra' was awarded the National e-Governance Gold Award at the National e-Governance Conference 2024 organised on Tuesday at Jio Convention Centre, Mumbai. During this, Deputy Chief Minister of Maharashtra Devendra Fadnis honoured Varanasi District Magistrate (DM) S Rajalingam, Chief Development Officer (CDO) Himanshu Nagpal, Chief Medical Officer (CMO) Dr Sandeep Chaudhary and Project Coordinator Ashutosh Singh with trophy, citation and prize money. This award has been given for district level initiative in e-governance in the field of administrative reforms and public grievances by the central government.

DM S Rajalingam said it is a matter of great pride and happiness for Kashi that the district level initiative has gained fame at the national level. "Patients do not have to visit government medical units for pathology tests and their reports. In view of this, an initiative named 'Lab Mitra' application was started in Varanasi in March last year with the efforts of the district administration and health department with the cooperation of HDFC Bank and an organisation called 'Three Eye Consulting'. This facility is being provided in 20 medical units, including all government hospitals and community health centres (CHCs) in the district," he said. The DM said after getting



Varanasi DM S Rajalingam receiving National e-Governance Gold Award from Maharashtra DyCM Devendra Fadnis in Mumbai on Tuesday.

the pathology test done at government medical units, now patients do not need to stand in line the next day to get the report. Whatever the type of test, its report is being sent to the patient's mobile (registered number). This system is being operated to save crowd and time, Rajalingam added. The CMO said from April 2023 till now, more than two and a half lakh patients have taken advantage of the 'Lab Mitra' report. "The trust of the people of the district has increased on this initiative. The number of patients visiting the CHCs has increased, which is also saving a lot of time and cost of the people living in remote areas of the district," he said, adding that by using the 'Lab Mitra' portal, the patients coming to the government hospitals or CHCs are registered for laboratory tests as per the doctor's prescription and after the test, the system generates an

online report which is sent in a link format on text message to the patient's phone number. By clicking on this link, the patient can get his complete lab test report, he added. Apart from this, Dr Chaudhary said that the patients can also download their reports in future by visiting the 'Lab Mitra' portal (labmitravns.com). The report goes to the patient's phone number after four hours of testing at CHCs-PHCs and after 12 hours of testing at the government hospitals. The Chief Minister of Maharashtra Eknath Shinde and the Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis were the guests of the programme, while other guests included Secretary DARP, Government of India V Srinivas, Secretary Electronics and Information Technology Government of India S Krishnan G, Chief Secretary Government of Maharashtra Sujata Saunik along with other officials.

# BOI MD visits Kanpur zone

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

MD & CEO of Bank of India (BOI) Rajneesh Karnatak visited Kanpur zone on Monday. Speaking at a townhall meeting of staff members organised here at the Kingston Resort, Cantonment, on Tuesday, he said, "Bank of India is one of the leading banks in the world to provide active banking services. The Bank is celebrating its 119th foundation day on September 7, 2024. The manner in which this bank has discharged its responsibility in the building of the nation and the progressive development of its economy is unforgettable and invaluable. The bank has over 5,100 branches in the country which are working firmly to meet the banking requirements. Our Bank has 47 branches/offices abroad which include 22 branches, one representative office and four subsidiaries



(23 branches) and one Joint Venture. Instant banking services are being provided at branches through use of advanced technology". He further said, "keeping in view the financial market needs, expectations and requirements of each class of customers as per the current changing scenario, our bank is launching several innovative services and systems. The bank has also been careful and responsible for its corporate social responsibilities. The bank is also committed to empower the lowest section of the society by promoting various initiatives and schemes of

the Government of India in particular. In this age of digitization, our bank is conscious of adopting the right strategies to improve the quality of customer service. The bank has adequate facilities and resources to meet the changing customer service requirements. Every staff member of the bank is competent and willing to serve the best customer service with dedication, hard work and unwavering commitment". General Manager Amrendra Kumar from FGMO, Lucknow, who was also present in the meeting, shared the business activities of the bank in his address. Ranveer Singh, Zonal Manager, Kanpur Zone, proposed the vote of thanks at the end of the programme. On this occasion, Deputy General Manager Vaibhav Anand from FGMO Lucknow, Deputy Zonal Manager of Kanpur Zone Jugal Kishore and other officials were present.

# PuVNL MD suspends two employees

Varanasi (PNS): Continuously taking strict action to streamline the power supply and other systems, Managing Director (MD) of Purvanchal Vidut Vitran Nigam Limited (PuVNL) Shambhu Kumar has ordered for suspension of two power employees posted in

Varanasi on Tuesday. He has suspended Nirmal Chatterjee, JMT TG-2 (Electricity), Urban Electrical Testing Section-I and Pradeep Gupta, Sub-Divisional Officer (SDO), Electricity Distribution Sub-Division, Bhadaini under Electricity Urban Distribution

Section-I. In compliance with the instructions given by Director (Personnel & Administration), PuVNL, Nirmal Chatterjee has been found prima facie guilty in the case of delay in meter verification and booking more than one meter ceiling at a time.

# UBI conducts annual quiz 'U Genius 3.0'



Winners of Bank of India's 'U Genius 3.0' annual quiz on Tuesday.

In a bid to develop self-confidence and intellect in students, Union Bank of India (UBI), Kanpur, organised a national level annual quiz 'U Genius 3.0' here at the Shatabdi Bhavan, HBTU on Tuesday. Vice-Chancellor, HBTU, Prof Samsher and Dy Zonal Head of the bank Prashant Desai inaugurated the event by lighting the ceremonial lamp. As many as 800 students from around 100 schools of the city participated

in the quiz who were also apprised of different banking services and its products. The team of Swaraj India Public School emerged winners and was felicitated with the trophy and citation by the chief guest. Winner team will participate in the zonal round to be organised in Varanasi. Dy Zonal Head Desai said the event will surely help students to attain career prospects by gaining more knowledge and increasing their self-confidence. Chief Manager (Operations) Manish Sachan and staff of the zonal office and branches were present. Senior Manager Manish Srivastava conducted the proceedings. Chief Manager Manish Sachan proposed the vote of thanks and extended greetings to the winning team for success in the ensuing semi-final round to be held in Varanasi.

# Workshop organised

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

A workshop was organised in the auditorium of Prayagraj Divisional Office of North Central Railway under the chairmanship of General Manager/North Central Railway, Upendra Joshi on Monday evening. Railway officials who worked in Kumbh Mela 2013 & 2019 shared their experiences for the

successful organization of the upcoming Kumbh Mela-2025. General Manager, North Central Railway (NCR), Upendra Chandra Joshi said that the workshop is very important for the organisation of Kumbh 2025 as through it we can once again assess our preparation in accordance with the experiences gained in relation to every area and improve it further.

# Kashi Jewellers organises exhibition

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

The Kashi Jewellers has organised a week-long exhibition at its Birhana Road showroom from September 2 to 9 to commemorate its 70th anniversary celebrations. Managing partner and vice-president Shreyansh Kapoor said on this occasion it had presented a series of 10,000 new designs of jew-



Customers buying jewellery at Kashi Jewellers showroom.

ellery. A large number of customers visit the showroom to avail discount benefit on purchase of jewellery during this period. Apart from heavy discount on gold rates, 20 per cent discount was being offered on diamond jewellery. Customers were also presented a gift on every purchase, he said. Dr Devika Kapoor, while thanking its customers, appealed to the people to take advantage of the event.

# CM's Phulpur visit today

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath will be visiting the Phulpur assembly constituency on September 4. CM Yogi Adityanath will inaugurate the Rojgar Mela to be held at IFFCO in Phulpur. Along with this, tablets and smartphones will be distributed to more than 10,000 youth. He will also lay the foundation stone of 350 projects worth ₹500 crore.

Ahead of the arrival of the CM Yogi Adityanath, the Cabinet minister Rakesh Sachan along with public representatives and top officials took stock of the venue of the programme to be held in IFFCO. Apart from Phulpur MP Praveen Patel, MLA Phaphamau Guru Prasad Maurya, Police Commissioner Tarun Gauba, Divisional Commissioner Vijay Vishwas Pant, District Magistrate Navneet Singh Chahal, Chief Development Officer (CDO) Gaurav Kumar and others were present. After the Lok Sabha elections, by-elections are to be held on 10 assembly seats. This by-election is also important for political parties because there is assembly election in UP in 2027. This is the reason why this by-election is being considered as the semi-final of the 2027 assembly elections. In the last Lok Sabha elections, MLA Praveen Kumar Patel from here was successful in making the lotus bloom on this seat, but the margin of victory over the SP candidate was very less. Now the BJP is preparing to contest once again on this seat of Phulpur assembly.

# Tata Memorial Centre, POWERGRID sign MoU



Officials of POWERGRID and Tata Memorial Centre exchanging MoU papers in Varanasi on Tuesday.

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between Tata Memorial Centre, Varanasi and Power Grid Corporation of India Limited (POWERGRID) on Tuesday to increase patient facilities in the hospital. Under this Rs 26.42 crore will be provided to the hospital by POWERGRID under its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programme. The amount will be used to purchase an additional linear accelerator (radiotherapy machine) in the Department of Radiation Oncology of the hospital. The number of patients is increasing day by day in Mahamana Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya Cancer Centre and Homi Bhabha Cancer

Hospital (MPMMCC/HBCH) in Varanasi. In view of the increasing number of patients, new facilities are also being increased in the hospital. Moving forward in this regard, an agreement has been signed between the hospital and POWERGRID under which a new linear accelerator will be installed in the hospital. About 50-60 per cent of the cancer patients coming to the hospital for treatment require radiation therapy. At present, there are a total of three radiation machines in MPMMCC/HBCH, on which on an average 200 patients are treated daily. At the same time, due to the high number of patients, many patients have to wait for a long time for their turn. With the arrival of this machine, this number is likely to

increase to an average of 300 per day which will help these two hospitals of Tata Memorial Centre to treat about 1000-1200 new cancer patients every year. This will provide convenience to the patients waiting for radiation and they will get treatment on time. While signing the MoU, Senior General Manager of POWERGRID, Varanasi AK Rai said, "Power Grid Corporation has always emphasised on helping those projects under CSR, which directly benefit the society. The machine received by the hospital under this agreement will directly provide relief to cancer patients, which will prove to be a big help not only for that patient but also for his/her entire family".

On this occasion, the Director of the hospital, Dr Satyajit Pradhan thanked Power Grid Corporation of India Limited and said "this agreement will bring great relief to cancer patients in the coming days. This will not only reduce the waiting list of patients waiting for radiotherapy treatment, but will also strengthen our objective, our commitment to provide quality treatment to every cancer patient near their home". The MoU was signed in the presence of DK Javeri, Executive Director, POWERGRID NR III, Sabahat Umar, Deputy General Manager CSR, Binod Kumar Human Resource Incharge, Varanasi, Dr BK Mishra, Deputy Director, HBCH, Dr Akash Anand, medical superintendent, HBCH/MPMMCC, Biresh Chaubey, Chief Administrative officer, HBCH/MPMMCC etc.

# LIC celebrates significant milestone

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

LIC, the world's No 1 strongest brand and India's leading life insurance and a financial conglomerate, celebrated the proud moment of 68th anniversary on September 1. Speaking on the occasion, MD & CEO Siddhartha Mohanty said, "This milestone is a testament to the dedication and hard work of our team, the loyalty of our customers and has consistently demonstrated a commitment to excellence, innovation and customer satisfaction. As we reach the significant milestone of 68 years in business, LIC proudly reflects on the journey of growth, innovation and unwavering commitment to excellence. Since our founding in 1956 with ₹5 crore, we have evolved with an asset base of ₹52.85 lakh crore and a Life fund of ₹44.31 lakh crore. Even after liberalisation of insurance sector for more than two decades, it has sustained its leadership position in the market with 69.91 per cent market share in policies and 58.87 per cent market share in First Year Premium Income in financial year 2023-24. Total premium income was ₹4.75 lakh crore with an increase of 0.22 per cent over the previous year. Total AUM increased by 16.48 per cent to ₹51.21 lakh crore and solvency margin improved to 1.98. There has been significant increase in the Indian Embedded Value (IEV) from ₹5.82 lakh crore as at March 31, 2023, to ₹7.27 lakh crore as at March 31, 2024, which is a 24.92 per cent increase. Also the share of non-participating business in Annualised Premium Equivalent (APE) under individual category

increased to 18.32 per cent from 7.12 per cent during the year 2022 and 8.89 per cent in 2023, due to a conscious paradigm shift in our approach. We have also registered a growth in our Net Value of New Business (VNB) which stands at ₹9,583 crore compared to ₹9,156 crore the previous year. On similar lines, net VNB margin also increased to 16.8 per cent from 16.2 per cent. As we celebrate this significant milestone, we reflect on our journey with pride and gratitude with our strength of a strong corporate office, eight zonal offices, 113 divisional offices, 74 customer zones, 2,048 branch offices, 1,584 satellite offices, 98,661 employees and a strong field force of over 14 lakh agents. The customer zones function from 8 am to 8 pm ensuring effective functioning at help desk, with focus on prompt attention to e-mails and voice calls. The LIC of India offers a comprehensive portfolio of 41 individual products, 12 group products, 7 individual riders and one group rider designed to cater to the diverse needs of every segment of society, such as Endowment Insurance, Term Insurance, Child Insurance, Annuity Plans, Group Insurance, Micro Insurance, Health and Unit Linked products. The plans are available offline as well as online. During the FY 2023-24 - the total number of claims settled is 221.80 lakh amounting to Rs. 2.30 lakh crore (Individual, Micro Insurance and P&GS). The percentage of maturity claims paid is 93.48 and death claim paid is 98.35. This milestone reaffirms our commitment to providing timely and seamless claim payments alleviating the financial burden on the fami-

lies of the deceased. LIC's Golden Jubilee Foundation (GJF), is established in the year 2006 as a part of LIC's Community Service Initiatives. During the year 2023-24, GJF has sponsored 116 projects and amount disbursed to the tune of ₹33.82 crore and 9,616 scholarships were disbursed amounting to ₹10.20 crore. LIC has proactively embraced digital transformation by launching online platforms and applications such as LIC Digital App, to meet the evolving needs of today's tech-savvy population. LIC has embraced the journey by going from physical to digital by introducing a range of services for customers, field force and employees convenience. LIC's Customer Portal and LIC digital Mobile App, digital channel for collections, in-house core insurance package, e-feap has fully digitalised or internal operations along with EDMS to facilitate servicing and information delivery to our customers. Online service request modules enable submission and fulfilment of various customer servicing requests. We have already rolled out our prestigious project called Digital Innovation and Value Enhancement (DIVE). This will cut across the entire value chain and enhance the digital experience of all our stakeholders from on boarding to claim settlement. The Corporation has received various awards and accolades during the year 2023-24 in areas of mobile app, digital marketing campaign, customer service, strategies for spreading insurance, women in insurance leadership, claim service, most preferred workplace, project implementation, etc. Some of the important accolades received during the year are as follows:- LIC of India

is the world's No 1 strongest insurance brand as per the Brand Finance Insurance 2024 report published on March 25, 2024. LIC has been ranked third amongst largest Indian companies as per Fortune India December 2023 issue, third amongst top 15 companies listed by Businessworld in the BW Real 500 list-LIC is the only Insurance company in the list. LIC is the fourth largest insurer in the world according to a ranking based on life and accident & health reserves of companies in 2022 by S&P Global Market Intelligence. Our 'Jeevan Utsav' product won the 'Innovative Product' Award - 13th Edition of Finnovity Conclave Awards. LIC is also internationally acclaimed financial conglomerate with its presence in 14 countries. It has also ventured into other financial services through its subsidiaries and associates viz LIC HFL, LIC HFL Asset Mgt Co Ltd, LIC Mutual Fund Asset Management Ltd., LIC Mutual Fund Trustee Pvt Ltd, LIC Pension Fund Ltd, LIC Cards Services Ltd, IDBI Bank Ltd. IDBI Trusteeship services Ltd. On the occasion we express gratitude to our policyholders, shareholders, employees and field force for their unwavering commitment through the years. Our mission remains focused on fostering trust and delivering on our promises. As we move forward, we will strive to uphold the values that have earned us the confidence of those we serve. We reaffirm our unwavering dedication to the welfare of our customers, staying true to our guiding principle: "Yogakshemam Vahamyaham - Your welfare is our responsibility." This commitment reflects our ongoing efforts to serve our customers with integrity and care.

## Modi: Brunei, Singapore are important partners in India's Act East policy



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

As he embarked on a visit to Brunei and Singapore, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Tuesday that the two nations are "important partners" in India's 'Act East' policy and asserted that his visits would further strengthen the partnership with the two countries and the larger ASEAN region. Modi is on a two-nation visit from September 3-5, starting with Brunei. "Today, I am embarking on a first ever bilateral visit to Brunei Darussalam. As we celebrate the 40 years of our diplomatic relations, I look forward to my meetings with His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah and other esteemed members of the

Royal family to advance our historical relationship to new heights," he said in his departure statement issued by the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA). The visit will further strengthen India's cooperation with Brunei in all existing sectors, including defence cooperation, trade and investment, energy, space technology, health cooperation, capacity building, culture as well as people-to-people exchanges and explore avenues for cooperation in newer sectors, the MEA earlier said. Modi's visit to Brunei is the first bilateral visit of an Indian prime minister to that country. "From Brunei, I will travel to Singapore on September 4. I look forward to the opportunity to meet President

Tharman Shanmugaratnam, Prime Minister Lawrence Wong, Senior Minister Lee Hsien Loong and Emeritus Senior Minister Goh Chok Tong. I will also meet with leaders of the Singapore's vibrant business community," Modi said. The prime minister said he looked forward to his discussions to "deepen our Strategic Partnership with Singapore", particularly in new and emerging areas of advanced manufacturing, digitalisation, and sustainable development. "Both countries are important partners in our Act East Policy and the Indo-Pacific Vision. I am confident that my visits would further strengthen our partnership with Brunei, Singapore and the larger ASEAN region," Modi said.

## CBSE conducts surprise inspections in crackdown on dummy schools

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) conducted a series of surprise inspections at 27 schools in Rajasthan and the national capital on Tuesday to check the 'dummy school' menace, top officials said. The move comes six months after the board cancelled the affiliation of 20 schools for enrolling dummy students and ineligible candidates. "These inspections were aimed at ensuring that the schools affiliated with the board are strictly adhering to the norms and bylaws set forth by CBSE. The inspections were carried out by 27 teams, each comprising a CBSE officer and a principal from a CBSE-affiliated school," CBSE Secretary Himanshu Gupta said. "The inspections were meticulously planned and executed in a synchronized manner, taking place simultaneously across all selected schools within a short timeframe," he added. Gupta said the approach was adopted to maintain the element of surprise, thereby ensuring that the information gathered about the operations and compliance of the schools is accurate and reflective of their everyday functioning. "The findings from these inspections will be reviewed comprehensively, and appropriate actions will be taken in cases of non-compliance. CBSE reiterates its commitment to rigorous monitoring and will continue to conduct such surprise inspections to ensure that affiliated schools uphold the quality and standards expected by the board," he added. Scores of students preparing for engineering and medical entrance exams prefer to take admission to dummy schools so that they can focus solely on their preparations for the competitive exams. They do not attend classes and straightaway appear in the board exams. Aspirants also choose dummy schools keeping in mind the quota in medical and engineering institutes available for the students from certain states. For example, the candidates who have completed Classes 11 and 12 in Delhi are considered for admission in the medical colleges of the national capital under the Delhi State Quota.



## Congress questions RSS locus standi on caste census

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

A day after the RSS' comments on caste census, the Congress on Tuesday wondered whether Prime Minister Narendra Modi would "hijack" another of its guarantee and conduct the caste census now with the Sangh having "given the green signal". The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) on Monday said it has no objection to collecting data on specific communities or castes, provided that the information is used for their welfare and not exploited as a political tool for electoral gains. Reacting to the remarks, Congress' general secretary in-charge communications Jairam Ramesh said RSS's preaching on caste census raises some basic questions such as - does it have a veto power over caste census. "Who is the RSS to give permission for caste census? What does the RSS mean when it says caste census should not be misused for electioneering? Is it to be a judge or umpire?" Ramesh said in a social media post in Hindi. Why has RSS maintained a "mysterious silence" on the need for a constitutional amendment to remove the 50 per cent cap on reservation for Dalits, Adivasis and OBCs, the Congress leader further asked. "Now that the RSS has given the green signal, will the non-biological Prime Minister

hijack another guarantee of Congress and conduct a caste census?" Ramesh said. Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge had said on Monday night that the RSS should clearly tell the country whether it is in favour or against caste census. "Is the Sangh Parivar, which is in favour of Manusmriti instead of the Constitution of the country, worried about the participation of Dalits, tribals, backward classes and poor-deprived society or not?" Kharge had said in a social media post in Hindi. Addressing the media on Monday in Kerala's Palakkad after a three-day coordination conclave called Samanwaya Baithak, Sunil Ambekar, RSS Akhil Bharatiya Prachar Pramukh, said caste and caste-relations were a "very sensitive issue" for the Hindu society and it is an important issue "for our national unity and integrity". He was responding to a query on caste census. So, it should be dealt with "very seriously" and not just on the basis of elections or politics. "So, as RSS thinks, yes, definitely for all welfare activities, addressing the particular community or caste which is lagging behind and so special attention is needed to some communities and caste. So, for that the government needs the numbers. It is very well practised...Earlier also it has taken. So, it can take it. No problem."

## Two insurgent groups to ink pact in presence of Amit Shah

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

An agreement will be signed between the central and Tripura governments and two insurgent groups of Tripura here on Wednesday, in presence of Union Home Minister Amit Shah, to end violence and bringing "lasting peace" in the Northeastern state. Tripura Chief Minister Manik Saha and senior officials of the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) and Tripura government will also be present during the signing of the Memorandum of Settlement. "In presence of Union Home Minister Amit Shah, a Memorandum of Settlement is to be signed among government of India, government of Tripura and representatives of National Liberation Front of Tripura (NLFT) and All Tripura Tiger Force (ATTF), in New Delhi on September 4," an official statement said. The MHA has been working tirelessly to fulfil Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of developed Northeast, free from extremism, violence and conflict, it said. Under the leadership of Prime Minister Modi, the government has signed 12 important agreements to bring peace and prosperity in the Northeast region, of which three relate to Tripura.

## SC moved by woman's long fight against divorce decree, calls system grossly injudicious

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The trials and tribulations of a woman fighting a protracted legal battle against a family court granting the decree of divorce to her estranged husband multiple times has moved the Supreme Court to the extent that it said the judicial system was "grossly injudicious" to her. The woman, who got married in 1991, gave birth to a son a year later and was deserted by her husband. He filed for divorce in a family court in Karnataka which not once but thrice granted the decree of divorce in favour of her husband disregarding the fact that he was not paying anything either to her or their minor child for maintenance. The family court was asked multiple times by the high court, which the woman approached against the grant of divorce, to decide afresh the petition of her husband. Each time the man managed to get the divorce decree. The high court, in the third instance, approved the family court's decision granting divorce to the husband on



payment of permanent alimony of Rs 20 lakh. The local court had awarded Rs 25 lakh to the woman. The history of the matrimonial dispute, spanning nearly three decades without the woman getting sufficient money as alimony, caught the attention of a bench of Justices Surya Kant and Ujjal Bhuyan. The top court deprecated the manner in which the family court kept on passing the decrees of divorce. "On perusal of the record, it seems to us that the judicial system has been grossly inju-

dicious to the appellant and her minor child, who has now attained majority. We say so for the reason that it is the respondent who subjected the appellant to extreme cruelty all these years, and never came forward to render any assistance for securing a better future for his own son or offered to pay even for his school education. "The respondent's own mother has been staying with her daughter-in-law/appellant all these years and has come forward against him. The mechanical manner in which the family court kept on pass-

ing decrees of divorce against the appellant not only exhibit a lack of sensitivity, but also suggests a hidden prejudice against the appellant. The courts ought not to have accorded any premium to the respondent's own misdemeanors," the bench said. The court, however, said it cannot be oblivious of the fact that the parties are living separately since 1992 and therefore sustained the decree of divorce granted by the family court conditionally. Frowning upon the misdemeanors of the husband, the bench said the claim of irretrievable breakdown of marriage cannot be used to the advantage of a party solely responsible for "tearing down the marital relationship." The apex court not only enhanced the alimony of Rs 20 lakh by Rs 10 lakh more but also ordered that the house currently occupied by the woman, her son, and her mother-in-law will remain with them and barred the man from interfering with the peaceful possession of the property.

"If the respondent owns any other immovable property, the son of the parties shall have preferential ownership rights in the same irrespective of any transfer of title by the respondent. This direction is necessitated for the reason that he (the couple's son) has an indefeasible and enforceable right to seek maintenance and adequate amount towards his school and higher education," the bench said. Making the directions compulsorily enforceable, the top court warned the man that non-compliance would automatically render the decree of divorce "null and void". It asked the man to pay the alimony within three months with seven per cent annual interest since August 3, 2006, the day the first decree of divorce was passed. "Similarly, if the respondent fails to pay the above awarded amount to the appellant within the stipulated time, the family court is directed to take coercive action against him in accordance with law," the bench said in a recent order.

## Government notifies constitution of 23rd Law Commission for 3 years tenure

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Government has notified the constitution of the 23rd Law Commission for a period of three years, with a provision to appoint serving Supreme Court and high court judges as its chairperson and members. The panel advises the government on complex legal issues. Once it is constituted, the government initiates the process of appointing its chief and members. According to an order of the Ministry of Law and Justice, the term of the 22nd Law Commission ended on August 31 and the new panel has been constituted with effect from September 1. Though the notification relating to the constitution of the 21st and 22nd law commissions, issued in September 2015 and February 2020 respectively, had provisions for appointing serving SC and HC judges as chairpersons and members, in the recent past, either retired top court judges or former chief justices of high courts have head-

ed the body. On August 31, the term of the 22nd Law Commission, which was without a chairperson for the past few months, ended with its key report on the uniform civil code (UCC) still in the works. The report prepared by the law panel on simultaneous elections is ready and pending submission to the law ministry. People aware of the procedure noted that the report cannot be submitted in the absence of a chairperson. Justice (ret'd) Ritu Raj Awasthi, who headed the 22nd law panel, was appointed a member of the anti-corruption watchdog Lokpal a few months ago. A high-level committee headed by former president Ram Nath Kovind submitted a report on 'one nation, one election' in March. Last year, the 22nd commission had initiated fresh consultations on the UCC. After obtaining suggestions from a cross-section of society, it was in the process of preparing a draft report when Justice Awasthi was appointed to the Lokpal. According to the order, the

panel will have a full-time chairperson and four full-time members, including member-secretary. The secretary of the Department of Legal Affairs and the secretary of the Legislative Department will be its ex-officio members. There cannot be more than five part-time members, according to the order. It said the chairperson/members "who are serving judges of the Supreme Court/High Court shall perform their functions on a whole-time basis up to the date of retirement from the Supreme Court/High Court or expiry of the term of the Commission, whichever be earlier." The time spent by them in the performance of such functions as chairperson or member of the Commission will be treated as "actual service". The order noted that in case "other category" of persons are appointed as chairperson or full-time members, the chairperson will be entitled a pay of Rs 2.50 lakh (fixed) per month. In case of members, a pay of Rs 2.25 lakh (fixed) per month will be admissible.

## WHO issues first ever guidelines on managing antibiotic pollution

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

The World Health Organization (WHO) has issued its first-ever guidelines on managing antibiotic pollution to address the global health threat posed by pharmaceutical waste from antibiotic manufacturing companies that has added the risk of antimicrobial resistance (AMR) or superbugs. The guidance sets targets to mitigate risks of AMR and protect aquatic life from antibiotic contamination, addressing a largely unregulated issue where environmental emissions from pharmaceutical production often go unchecked. The framing of guidelines is crucial in the context of India too, where active pharmaceutical ingredient (API) manufacturing poses significant environmental challenges. Wastewater from these plants frequently contains harmful byproducts that contaminate local water sources. This pollution not only affects ecosystems but also public health by potentially spreading antibiotic resistance, which as per the WHO is a top 10 global public health threat. A study last year found that, in 2019, it was responsible for 1.27 million deaths. Studies reveal that the most common antibiotics found in water sources include Sulfamethoxazole which has



been detected in 96 per cent of analyzed samples; Trimethoprim, frequently found in water sources and often present alongside sulfamethoxazole while Ciprofloxacin is another commonly detected antibiotic. Additionally, various other antibiotics have been identified in water sources, including tetracyclines, macrolides, fluoroquinolones, and beta-lactams. "Pharmaceutical waste from antibiotic manufacturing can facilitate the emergence of new super bugs, which can spread globally and threaten our health. Controlling pollution from antibiotic production contributes to keeping these life-saving medicines effective for everyone," said Dr Yukiko Nakatani, WHO Assistant Director-General for AMR ad interim. Globally, there is a lack of accessible information on the environmental damage caused by manufacturing of medicines. "The guidance provides

an independent and impartial scientific basis for regulators, procurers, inspectors, and industry themselves to include robust antibiotic pollution control in their standards," added Dr Maria Neira, Director, Department of Environment, Climate Change and Health, WHO. Welcoming the move, Professor and Dr Sangeeta Sharma, from Institute of Human Behaviour and Allied Sciences (IHBAS) and President of the Delhi Society for Promotion of Rational Use of Drugs (DSPRUD), highlighted that antibiotics and resistance genes loaded pharmaceutical wastewater poses a significant environmental threat. "This risk is exacerbated by inadequate treatment processes and irresponsible disposal practices," she added. The guidance sets health-focused goals to minimize the risk of AMR emergence and spread, and also outlines objectives to mitigate risks to aquatic life from antibiotics used in humans, animals, or plants. It covers all steps from the manufacturing of active pharmaceutical ingredients (APIs) and formulation into finished products, including primary packaging. Efforts to tackle this problem could also involve international collaboration and support, as the impact of such pollution can extend beyond national borders, as per the WHO document.

## Centre in process of framing policy to balance salt intake

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre is in the process of framing a policy that balances salt intake to combat rising non-communicable disease (NCD) such as cardiovascular diseases and hypertension while ensuring adequate iodine levels to prevent deficiency disorders. Moving forward, a policy-based approach that balances salt reduction with adequate iodine supplementation is essential for better health outcomes is in the offing, indicated Dr Shikha Vardhan, ADG, National Programme for Prevention and Control of Non-Communicable Diseases (NP-NCD), Union Health Ministry here at a meeting led by Nutrition International, WHO-India, Resolve to Save Lives, and the Iodine Global Network. Among others, the meet was attended by experts from NP-NCD and the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) which is deliberating in this regard to address the double health burden of high salt intake and low iodine level. Dr. Vardhan also mentioned that the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) is revising the National Iodine Deficiency Disorders Control Programme guidelines to ensure optimal iodine nutrition. This action comes in response to concerns that no



State in India is completely free from Iodine Deficiency Disorders (IDD), as reported by the Ministry in Parliament in 2022. Iodine is an essential micronutrient, needed daily in amounts of 100-150 micrograms for normal growth and development. Experts noted that current WHO guidelines recommend limiting salt intake to less than 5 grams per day, but in India, people consume nearly twice this amount, leaving them majorly vulnerable to hypertension. Currently, an estimated 220 million people in India are suffering from hypertension. Dr Alka Rao of FSSAI highlighted ongoing efforts like the Eat Right campaign to support healthier choices. The meeting called for more nationally representative data on sodium and iodine intake

that could aid in making informed policy decisions and tailoring interventions effectively. Under the National Iodine Deficiency Disorders Control Programme (NIDDCP), the goal is to bring the prevalence of IDD to below 5 percent in the country and to ensure 100 percent consumption of adequately iodated salt (15ppm) at the household level. The experts at the meet also suggested that in addition to mass awareness campaigns, innovative strategies that promote the use of low sodium salt substitutes that have proven to be effective should be explored. Policies should be implemented to reduce salt intake from all sources, including restaurant meals, public procurement, packaged foods, and to reinforce mandatory iodization, said the experts.

## Road crashes leading cause of deaths from unintentional injuries in India: Report

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Road crashes remain the leading cause of deaths from unintentional injuries in India, accounting for over 43 per cent of such fatalities, with overspeeding being the primary factor, according to a new report released by the Union Ministry of Health here. The "National Strategy for Prevention of Unintentional Injury," report which was released at the "Safety 2024" World Conference on Injury Prevention and Safety Promotion, highlights that while drowning, falls, poisoning, and burns also contribute to unintentional injury deaths, road traffic crashes (RTCs) are the most significant concern. The report reveals that in 2022, there were 430,504 deaths from unintentional injuries and 170,924 from intentional injuries, with RTCs making up 43.7 per cent of unintentional injury deaths. It also noted that despite efforts to improve road safety, India continues to grapple with a high number of fatalities due to road traffic injuries (RTIs). The mortality ratio remains constant at approximately 86 per cent for males and 14 per cent for females. "Over-speeding is the leading cause of these deaths, account-

ing for a staggering 75.2 per cent of fatalities. Other major contributing factors include driving on the wrong side of the road (5.8 per cent) and driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs (2.5 per cent). "Analysis of RTIs reveals a significant disparity in mortality rates based on location. Rural areas bear the brunt of RTI fatalities, with a staggering 67.8 per cent of deaths occurring there compared to 32.2 per cent in urban areas. Furthermore, the data suggests that open areas and residential zones might be particularly dangerous, with potentially higher fatality rates compared to other locations," it said. National highways, which have a share of only 2.1 per cent of the total road length in the country, account for the maximum number of road fatalities and were responsible for 45 lives per 100 km in 2022. The three-day conference, hosted by IIT Delhi and co-sponsored by WHO, aims to address these issues through a comprehensive approach that includes safer infrastructure and protection for vulnerable road users. International experts are focusing on improving coordination, strengthening research, and integrating injury prevention with global health strategies to build a safer future for all.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

## A strategic pivot

Amid rising regional tensions, Indo-US defence ties are strengthening, marking a significant strategic shift in South Asia

India has solidified its defence partnership with the United States through two pivotal agreements, signaling a deepening American commitment to South Asia at a time when China's military influence is expanding across the region. The agreements, secured during Indian Defence Minister Rajnath Singh's recent four-day visit to the United States, include a Security of Supply Arrangement (SOSA) and a Memorandum of Agreement on the Assignment of Liaison Officers. These developments underscore a significant shift in the dynamics of Indo-US relations, with both nations moving closer in their defence cooperation. The SOSA, a non-binding bilateral pact, is designed to prioritise support for defence-related goods and services between the two countries. This agreement is particularly crucial in addressing supply chain vulnerabilities that are critical to national security. Under the SOSA, India will receive assurances from Washington's Defence Priorities and Allocations System, while Indian companies will provide priority support to the United States. India's inclusion in the elite group of 18 SOSA partners, which includes nations like Australia, Canada, and Britain, marks a significant step in defence cooperation.



In effect it means if either of two nations ended up in combat with an adversary, the SOSA could help accelerate the delivery of crucial weapons and materials required for defence, thereby ensuring robust supply chains in times of crisis. India and the United States have already established several key strategic agreements, including the Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA) signed in 2016

and real-time intelligence sharing since 2018 under the Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement (COMCASA). These agreements, alongside the new SOSA, create a framework for expedited deliveries of contracted goods and services, potentially streamlining defence commerce between the two nations. In 2019, the signing of the Industrial Security Annex marked another significant step, allowing the sharing of classified US information with private Indian defence firms—a departure from previous restrictions. The Reciprocal Defence Procurement Agreement could further streamline defence commerce, enabling private companies in both countries to bid on each other's contracts. Indeed, a technologically advanced Indian military aligns with American interests. The recent Indo-US defence agreements mark a significant milestone in the evolving relationship between the two nations. As China's influence continues to grow across South Asia, particularly in Islamabad and the Maldives, these agreements provide a foundation for enhanced collaboration and a shared commitment to regional stability. With these developments, India and the United States are poised to further deepen their defence ties, building a partnership that could play a crucial role in shaping the future of the region.

## PICTALK



Devotees carry an idol of Lord Ganesh ahead of the Ganesh Chaturthi festival, in Mumbai

## The US endorses India-Tibet ties

The recent visit of a bipartisan delegation of U S lawmakers to New Delhi and Dharamshala marks a significant moment in the US diplomacy in the region



ASHOK K MEHTA

A Tibet festival started on 3 September at India International Centre New Delhi to celebrate its rich Buddhist heritage, culture and identity. The Sikyong (head of Central Tibet Administration, Penpa Tshering, will preside over various activities to highlight Tibet's geo-strategic, spiritual and cultural importance for India.

His Holiness Dalai Lama at 89, is in a New York hospital for medical treatment but is considered in good health. US Special Coordinator on Tibet, Uzra Jeyra met him which elicited "immediate (solemn) protest from China". Foreign Affairs spokesperson Mao Ning said: "we don't allow Dalai Lama to engage in political activities in the US". Backchannel talks between the Dalai Lama envoy and China have been going on for an undisclosed period though Beijing does not confirm them. Talks are being pushed by the US House Resolution Resolve Tibet Act July 2024 which calls for restoration of its full autonomy. India needs to add its voice for Tibet's autonomy both internally and externally as part of a broader coalition. India's recognition of full Chinese sovereignty over Tibet was based on Beijing granting and implementing Tibet's autonomy. Instead, China has quashed Tibet's autonomy and trade treaties opening for India to take a more nuanced position.

Two issues require GoI's prompt attention: the Dalai Lama succession; and the border issue including restoration of peace and tranquillity and full disengagement in east Ladakh. The visit of a bipartisan US delegation of lawmakers to Dharamshala and Delhi and being received both by Dalai Lama and Prime Minister Narendra Modi was significant. China baiter Nancy Pelosi had some unpleasant things to say about President Xi Jinping that drew Chinese ire. On the ground, the sinicisation process of Xijiang (Tibet) started in the mid-1960s. The time-tested method of injecting 7.5 mn Han Chinese into Tibet along with neutralization of Tibetan



Buddhism by deploying Chinese monks in Tibetan monasteries was designed to change the heart and soul of Tibet. Soon militarisation and infrastructure construction began which has hurt the environment. USD 5.8bn was spent on the Sichuan to Tibet railways system which is being extended to borders with India, Nepal and Bhutan. A new border law has led to the building of 628 well-off border villages close to or encroached into neighbouring countries. In 1965 Convenience Police Stations were constructed as a key security innovation: Big Brother is Watching. By 2011 Tibet Autonomous Region advertised for 2500 police stations with 458 designated for Lhasa alone. By 2016, this grid-style social management of Tibet had recruited thousands of Han Chinese and some Tibetan policemen. A Chinese Communist Party (CCP) political secretary has always kept a hawk-eye vigil over Tibet which is run by the CCP from Beijing. Internal policing has resulted in fostering a feeling of 'otherness' by the surveillance drive. There are reports that attempts are being made to recruit Tibetans into the PLA including some forcible intake. The day is not far when some Nepalese might opt to join PLA for other than the South West Theatre Command in



THE VISIT OF A BIPARTISAN US DELEGATION OF LAWMAKERS TO DHARAMSALA AND DELHI AND BEING RECEIVED BOTH BY DALAI LAMA AND PRIME MINISTER NARENDRA MODI WAS SIGNIFICANT

Tibet. This will be the result of the ill-conceived Agniveer policy. The Chinese Renaming Campaign has resulted in what Forum for Non-Violent Alternatives (FNVA) has called 'Thread of Beads: an analysis of renaming 62 locations in India's Arunachal Pradesh since 2017. China claims that 90 per cent of Zangnan (Arunachal Pradesh) is illegally occupied by India. Chief Minister Assam, Himanta Biswa Sarma, has suggested renaming 62 locations in Tibet. This is not likely to irk the Chinese. The Chinese renaming drive was done in four phases in 2017, 2021, 2023 and 2024.

It had been supplemented by salami-slicing into Nepal and Bhutan by building Xiakong villages (well-off) in contested areas to strengthen their claims to them. While Nepal and Bhutan are pretending this has not happened or happening, India is building some 600 vibrant villages for which funds have been released. Numerous encroachments have taken place in India also. The strategic importance of Tibet for India cannot be overstated. The root of the border problem and the Tibet issue is India's failure to comprehend its significance in time and act. In C Eastern Command, Lt Gen Sir Francis Tucker had foreseen in 1946 in a paper he

wrote that India must prevent China from occupying Tibet and be prepared to occupy it. This did not happen for which we are paying now. The priority for now is to coordinate with Dalai Lama to articulate his succession. The Dalai Lama has been silent on it for some time now but has spoken and written about it in the past.

The Chinese are bound to appoint their own Dalai Lama as they appointed a Panchen Lama (second to Dalai Lama) Gyaltsen Norbu. This must be pre-empted. The CTA is preparing a new map of Tibet with the help of cartographic experts from Princeton University in the US.

The issue of the map and India announcing the contours of its Tibet policy including the border and full disengagement of PLA from its intrusions in east Ladakh have to be coordinated with CTA. A succession policy should also be outlined. With Tibetans migrating to the US and soon the majority of Tibetans residing there than in India, the Tibet issue may vanish leaving Delhi with no potential leverage against Beijing.

(The writer, a retired Major General, was Commander, IPKF South, Sri Lanka, and founder member of the Defence Planning Staff, currently the Integrated Defence Staff; views are personal)

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

## TIP OF THE ICEBERG

Madam — The Justice Hema Committee report was only the tip of the iceberg against the sexual harassment. What we need is the solution and not confrontation anymore to the ongoing unpalatable issue. The time has changed and we are in the midst of gender equality. The world has become thickly competitive and along with freedom comes the package of jealousy, comparing with each other and at the end taking the pressure of enhancing the social status which is at times caused by giving up their own personal liberty and rights. The ongoing sexual harassment is not just there in one particular industry.

It's a rapid fire spreading across industries and globally. Cinema industry is in the eyes of the public because the glamour attached to celebrities is coming to light quickly. Today our culture has changed and values eroded. The Hon'ble Supreme Court permits living together and there are couples united this way. Some relationship breaks lead to mental turmoil by physical assault. The ratio of hate, love changed overnight, ending up in a divorce. All this is happening only because of economic independence of the once a weaker sex. There's no more weaker sex as we can conclude and in many places women are the stronger sex challenges men in many fields.

Where is the actual problem then? The problem starts with the anticipation by comparison to improve upon the social status. Even the luxuries became needs from wants under the current trend. When the background to the issue is such, how can we fix men alone as the reasons for the harassment? It was surprising to observe that a very senior artist after having acted in more than 200 movies has come out with her grievances that can't be taken at face value. One thing is to be noted that when someone is looking for an opportunity they shouldn't try it out as a chance since the very word 'Chance' dilutes the talents and ends up in a compromise and thereby the merits is taking

## Need for the caste census



In the absence of fresh data, government agencies are still formulating policies and allocating subsidies based on the data accrued from the 2011 Census. The government estimated that around 810 million people required food assistance for 5 more years. However, this estimate is based on the 2011 census. Economists pointed out that more than 100 million deserving Indians would not get the benefit of the 5-year

extension of free ration because of the government's failure to conduct the long-due population census. A government cannot function without updating necessary and detailed data on the population of the country every ten years. So, census and caste census should immediately and simultaneously be undertaken. A caste census will not add to the cost of conducting a census. A caste census can be done only by adding a question or two to the questionnaire for the census. Caste hatred and caste nepotism are like fractures in our society. After a suspected fracture, a doctor always takes decisions after doing at least an X-ray. Any action on caste reservation must similarly be taken after collecting necessary data by conducting a caste census.

Sujit De | Kolkata

the back seat.

A P Thiruvadi | Chennai

## RAINS WRECK HAVOC IN TELUGU STATES

Madam — The heavy rains have wreaked havoc in both Telugu states. The way Vijayawada has been inundated leaving lakhs of people got vacated to safe places and scores of people dead is unprecedented. The state governments have geared up their relief operations.

The centre should come forward with all its might to help out the states in their most trying times. The seasons in India have been acting extreme with a regularity. The hot summer with abnormal levels of temperatures is now followed by rainy season with heavy down pours. There should be proper preparedness to mitigate the fury of nature. Raising green cover and decreasing carbon print will help in long run.

DVG Sankara Rao | Vizianagaram

## BREAK ON RELIGIOUS BREAK

Madam — While it may be true that the CM of Assam has not done justice to his

constitutional post on numerous occasions vis-a-vis the Muslims of the state, his move to put a brake on the two-hour break for Friday prayers in the state Assembly can hardly be compared with Hitler's treatment of the Jews. Hitler wanted a total extermination of the Jews and was unapologetic about targeting millions of them.

Has Sarma given a similar call to eliminate Muslims from the state of Assam? All that he has done is to put an end to a practice that allowed Muslims to avail of a two-hour break as a matter of right, in order to fulfil their religious obligations.

Imagine the chaos that would ensue if professionals of other denominations were to press for similar breaks in the course of their duties? Is there anything that is more holy and sacred and pleasing to one's Creator than the performance of prescribed duties?

Avinash Godbole | Dewas

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

## Citation manipulation is undermining research integrity

As institutions chase rankings, the very foundation of scientific inquiry is at risk, calling for urgent reforms in how research quality is assessed and rewarded

The mushrooming of predatory journals, fake research publications, and manipulated citations compromises the integrity of academic research. In the latest NIRF 2024 rankings, serious concerns were raised regarding the dropping ranking of many prestigious national institutions. Many mediocre institutions climbed to a higher level than institutions of national repute. Though the purpose of accreditations and rankings is to improve the quality of each institution through a competitive spirit, one major point of concern is that many institutions climbed the ladder through a single parameter, the publication metrics. The over-emphasis on publication spoils our country's academic and research environment. Even people who don't know how to write a paper properly publish one paper per month. There was a time when a researcher used to publish one or two papers per year. Even at the international level, people have expressed reservations about citation metrics. In a recent issue of Nature (published on



20th August), a team of researchers led by Yasir Zaki explicitly shows that a citation black market is operating in our society. The citation black market is the unscrupulous act of exchanging citations to enhance research articles' perceived influence unduly. The citation black market functions through the following mechanisms, 1. Citation Cartels: Citation cartels are groups of researchers who agree to quote each other's work a lot, even if it has nothing to do with the current topic. These cartels can change citation metrics in a big way, giving the wrong impression of how important and influential the study is.

2. Paid Citations: Citations may sometimes be available for purchase by researchers or publications. This phenomenon is especially widespread

in predatory publications, which frequently give primacy to financial gain above academic honesty. To enhance their citation counts, researchers may compensate these journals to incorporate their work into other publications, therefore artificially inflating their citation metrics. The study published in the journal Nature found that the companies were charging \$300 for 50 citations and \$500 for 100 citations. 3. Coercive Citation: Journal editors or reviewers can also manipulate citations by pushing writers to include certain papers, usually their own, to boost the number of citations for specific journals or articles. This can make the peer review process less reliable and tilt the research towards certain people or groups. Many people have been practising this to boost their scientometrics level. The intense pressure on academics to publish frequently and in high-impact journals drives this booming citation black market. The obsession with the impact factor as a factor of academic or scientific excel-

lence has incentivized citation manipulation. The study showed that Google Scholar (and ResearchGate), is manipulatable. Despite the conspicuous vulnerabilities, these are used to judge the quality of a researcher. The 'citation black market' has several detrimental effects on the scientific community and society. The government should reconsider its reliance on citation-based metrics, such as the impact factor, as the primary indicators of research quality. Alternative metrics, such as article-level, open peer reviews, and qualitative research impact assessments, should be explored and adopted. Metrics evaluating the social impact of research—that of policy, industry, or public understanding—should also be considered. This strategy can inspire effort in addressing practical problems and acknowledges the broader benefits of research to society. (The writer is an adjunct faculty at the National Institute of Advanced Studies; views are personal)



BIJU DHARMAPALAN



## FIRST COLUMN

## GENERATION Z'S FASHION DILEMMA

Can Gen Z find a sustainable balance between personal style and financial responsibility?



SHAINY SHARMA

Fashion has always been a form of self-expression and identity, but for Millennials or Generation Z (Gen Z); Generation Alpha (Gen Alpha) and many more, it has taken on new dimensions. The generation, growing up in the digital age, is deeply influenced by social media, fast fashion and the need for constant reinvention. Moreover, the spending habits of Gen Z on fashion are notable not just for the frequency of purchases but also for the psychological and financial implications. While many in this generation are still students or early in their careers, they tend to spend a substantial portion of their disposable income on clothing and accessories.

The constant bombardment of new trends and must-have items can create a sense of urgency and FOMO, leading to impulsive purchases, driven by the fear of missing out on trends or sales, which is a common behaviour among the current generation. This generation is also more likely to engage in buy now, pay later schemes, which can further lead to debt accumulation if not managed carefully.

The desire to maintain a certain image can result in financial strain, as spending on fashion takes precedence over saving for the future. Algorithms on social media platforms are designed to show users content that aligns with their interests, including fashion. This means that as users scroll, they are often presented with targeted ads and influencer promotions that encourage them to buy more, even if they don't need anything. Social media is a major driver of contemporary fashion, influ-



encing how trends are created, spread and consumed.

While it has democratized fashion, giving individuals more influence and visibility at the same time it has also contributed to the challenges of fast fashion, overconsumption and sustainability issues. Thus, while social media is not solely responsible for fashion, it is undoubtedly one of the most powerful forces shaping the industry today. As a result, fashion has become both a passion and a source of significant expenditure for the generation, driving new consumer behaviours and reshaping the fashion industry. Fashion is not just about clothing rather it is a vital tool for expressing individuality and belonging. In a world where social media plays a dominant role, the clothes one wears are often seen as an extension of one's brand.

Platforms like Instagram, TikTok and Pinterest allow users to curate and showcase their style to a global audience, reinforcing the importance of fashion as a form of self-expression. The desire to create a unique and ever-evolving identity pushes this generation to frequently update their wardrobes. Mindless scrolling for fashion is a double-edged sword. While it provides entertainment and easy access to the latest trends, it can lead to impulsive buying, overconsumption and a detachment from sustainable and ethical practices. Being mindful of how much time is spent on these platforms and making conscious decisions about purchases can help mitigate these effects.

The need to stand out while simultaneously fitting in with peer groups creates a paradoxical demand for both originality and conformity, leading to increased spending on fashion items. Fast fashion brands, have capitalized on this behaviour by offering affordable, trendy clothing that changes frequently. These brands release new collections at a rapid pace, allowing consumers of every generation to keep up with the latest styles without breaking the bank—at least in the short term. However, the low prices and frequent purchases add up, leading to significant overall spending. As this generation continues to mature, it will be interesting to see how their fashion consumption evolves and whether a balance can be struck between the desire for personal style and the need for ethical, sustainable practices.

(The writer is a faculty at Art of Living, views expressed are personal)

## UPA: Addressing employee aspirations



B K SINGH

Unified Pension Scheme promises a guaranteed pension for long-serving employees, but at a significant fiscal cost to the exchequer



The old pension scheme (OPS) has been a big burden on the union and states' budget of the country. In one of the economic reforms, it was shelved for employees joining government services in 2004 and later. The new scheme was called the National Pension Scheme (NPS), where the employee had to contribute 10% of the salary during the entire period of service. Initially, the government too was to make a matching contribution of 10%, which was later increased to 14%. The corpus generated for pension this way was invested in government securities, shares and corporate bonds, which had daily net asset value like mutual funds. At the time of retirement, at least 40% of the corpus is to be used for purchasing an annuity. The NPS scheme does not guarantee a monthly pension equivalent to 50% of the last salary drawn.

This led to resentment among the government employees and opposition parties especially Congress saw an opportunity to keep the BJP-led central government in the dock. Among several freebies, Congress also promised in the election manifesto to revert to OPS in states they came to power. Montek Singh Ahluwalia has gone on record to bring home the point that the economy of the country will be ruined if OPS is revived for employees who joined service in and after 2004. Many experts have also concurred with the views. Congress won the Himachal Pradesh Assembly election on the promise to revert to OPS but did not implement it. Subsequently in the Telangana election and also in the Lok Sabha 2024 election, the revival of OPS was not again brought up in the manifesto.

BJP having disappointed with the Lok Sabha results in Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh had to make a tightrope walk and find a middle ground between OPS and NPS. The central government now proposes a Unified Pension Scheme (UPS) for employees whose service lasts for 25 years



THE NEW SCHEME WAS CALLED THE NATIONAL PENSION SCHEME (NPS), WHERE THE EMPLOYEE HAD TO CONTRIBUTE 10% OF THE SALARY DURING THE ENTIRE PERIOD OF SERVICE. INITIALLY, THE GOVERNMENT TOO WAS TO MAKE A MATCHING CONTRIBUTION OF 10%, WHICH WAS LATER INCREASED TO 14%

or more to get a pension of 50% of the average of the preceding twelve months' salary before the super annulation. The pension amount will be inflation-adjusted in dearness allowance twice a year. It has also a provision for a 60% family pension, for all diseased employees. The scheme does not benefit those who served for less than ten years. However, a monthly pension of Rs 10,000 has been guaranteed for employees who retired after serving for at least ten years. An additional sweetener has also been brought in the provision for the payment of a lump sum amount linking it with the duration of service in the government.

The scheme will come into effect from 1st April 2025 and will benefit 23 lakh employees of the central Government if they opt for it. Further, if all states also opt for the scheme, 90 lakh employees will be benefited in the country. The Maharashtra government, where the Assembly election is due shortly, has already opted for the scheme. UPS is also a contributory scheme like NPS, where employees' contributions remain unchanged at 10% and the government matching contribution is increased from 14% to 18.5%.

If the monthly salary of the employee is Rs 50,000, the annual increase in the corpus is 3%, equivalent to a compound annual growth of 8%. SBI, LIC and UTI are three managers of corpus for employees' pensions. SBI offers 9.75% and LIC 9.56% interest on the fund. Currently, in NPS, government employee has three options for investment and 95% of subscribers allow 65% investment in government securities, 15% in equities and the remaining 20% in corporate debt.

Since the corpus is not large enough to earn 50% of the average of the last twelve months' salary, the government's matching contribution has been increased from 14% to 18.5%. Cabinet Secretary TV Somanathan on UPS said, "definitely fiscally more prudent." "It remains within the same architecture of contributory funded scheme.

This is the critical difference. The OPS is unfunded, non-contributory scheme, this is funded, contributory scheme. The only difference in the changes made is to give an assurance and not leave things to the vagaries of market forces. But otherwise the structure of UPS has best elements of both (OPS and NPS)", he said. Economists think that UPS balances the fiscal cost and the aspiration of the employee. The increased cost of living will be taken care of because the real pension would not change as it is indexed to inflation. In NPS, if inflation goes up real pension comes down. Nevertheless, the scheme would put an extra burden of Rs 6250 crores on the government in the first year.

This has been done to satisfy 23 lakh beneficiaries, who are vocal political constituencies and no political party would easily ignore their demand. It is expected that most states would adopt UPS, without bothering for additional financial burden.

With the announcement of UPS, opposition parties are stepping up their demand for restoration of OPS. Economists have been consistently warning against the restoration; it has the potential to make the growth sluggish and hamper the progress of the nation. It also impacts the lives of the poor. Economic Advisory

Council to the Prime Minister has suggested that reverting to OPS will be catastrophic for poor populations and would crowd out private investments in states that revert to it. Reserve Bank of India in January 2023 had flagged concerns about the government finances for states opting to revert to OPS last year.

RBI had already cautioned that the move would lead to accumulation of liabilities, which can become a major risk in future. RBI had also said that states were expected to incur a 16% rise in pension expenditure at Rs 4,63,436 Crores as against Rs 3,99,813 crores in the previous year. Pension outgo under NPS is Rs 4 lakh crores, which would be Rs 17 lakh crores if OPS is reverted. At present Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh and Punjab have reverted to OPS. Since then BJP has come back to power in Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh and it is hoped that both governments will continue with NPS and opt for UPS with effect from 1st April 2025. Punjab is governed by AAP and their main agenda is to remain in power and not to be concerned about the state's finances.

UPS itself is causing a financial burden on the Central government of Rs 6250 crores in the first year. If all the states opt for it, the total economic burden on central and all state governments would be of the order of Rs 25,000 crores in the first year. Let there be no politics and political parties be conscious of maintaining fiscal discipline.

(The writer is a retired Principal Chief Conservator of Forests -Head of Forest Force- Karnataka; views are personal)

## Policy rollbacks: The unseen cost of ignoring stakeholder consultation

There have been a number of high-profile policy rollbacks, underscoring the need for consultation and consensus-building before implementing major reforms

Since the Modi Government 1.0, India has witnessed a series of high-profile policy rollbacks that highlight a critical issue in governance: the need for broader consultation and consensus-building before introducing significant reforms. The latest example is the rollback of the lateral entry scheme, which sought to bring professionals from outside the traditional civil services into government roles.

While the merits and demerits of such a policy can be debated, the rapid reversal following its announcement points to a deeper, more systemic issue—the lack of comprehensive stakeholder engagement. This pattern is not new. The governments



JAIDEEP VAIDESWAR

attempts to implement sweeping reforms have repeatedly stumbled due to insufficient consultation. The Land Acquisition Bill, the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) paired with the National Register of Citizens (NRC), and the Farm Laws all serve as prime examples. In each case, the policies were introduced with minimal input from those most affected—be it farmers, minority

communities, or state governments. The predictable outcome has been an intense public backlash, forcing the government to either backpedal or face prolonged unrest. The trend is concerning. Policymaking in a diverse democracy like India requires not only a vision but also the patience to engage with a wide range of stakeholders. This includes not just the obvious beneficiaries or those directly affected but also civil society, industry experts, and regional representatives. The lack of such engagement has led to a growing distrust between the government and the public, where every new announcement is met with suspicion rather than optimism. Moreover, the need for broader consultation

becomes even more pressing when considering the long-term impact of these policies. Short-term political gains or expedient decision-making may lead to swift policy announcements, but the absence of robust dialogue with stakeholders can result in policies that are unsustainable or unimplementable in the long run. Take, for instance, the recent discussion in the media on potential additional restrictions on Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in the tobacco sector. While the government may have had reasons for this move, the absence of dialogue with stakeholders—particularly tobacco farmers—has exacerbated concerns. Tobacco provides livelihood

to 36 million people including 6 million farmers and 20 million farm labour engaged in tobacco farming. Since the huge scale of investment of \$4 trillion that the finance minister pointed to at the recent Voice of Global South Summit, it is clear that the FDI is the only way to protect farmers. Similarly, both the ill-conceived Tax Collection at Source (TCS) on foreign travel and now the introduction of the new Tax Clearance

Certificate requirement for Indians travelling abroad are poorly thought through and have virtually no machinery to provide certificates on an emergency basis. The repeated lack of consensus-building not only undermines the effectiveness of policies but also erodes public trust in governance. It creates an environment where even well-intentioned reforms are viewed with scepticism, and the potential benefits are overshadowed by the immediate backlash. This is particularly damaging in a country as diverse as India, where the success of any policy hinges on its acceptance across different regions, communities, and economic strata. Furthermore, these repeated rollbacks damage India's



international reputation, as global investors and partners begin to view the country as an uncertain policy environment. This uncertainty not only affects domestic stakeholders but also risks deterring foreign investment, which is crucial for driving economic growth and development in a rapidly globalizing world. Moving forward, the government must adopt a more inclusive approach to policymaking. This means going beyond the corridors of power in New Delhi and engaging with stakeholders at the grassroots level. It means recognizing that the voices of citizens, small business owners, and regional leaders, are not just peripheral—they are central to the success of any

reform. It also means being open to feedback and willing to make adjustments before policies are finalized, rather than being forced into a retreat after the fact. India's growth story is too important to be derailed by avoidable missteps in policy formulation. By fostering a culture of consultation and consensus, the government can ensure that its reforms not only achieve their intended goals but also enjoy the support and trust of the people. The lesson from recent rollbacks is clear: no matter how well-conceived a policy may be, it cannot succeed without the buy-in of those it is meant to serve.

(The writer is a former consultant to MyGov. Views expressed are personal)

## Exercise restraint, TMC leader warns WB protesters

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■  
KOLKATA

Days after Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee advised her party men to "hiss if not bite the detractors who spread canards against her Government," on the RG Kar Medical College rape and murder case, a Trinamool Congress leader has publicly warned the agitators to exercise restraint or see their women getting openly humiliated.

"This is my warning to all those protesters who are passing bad remarks against Mamata Banerjee ... if they do not stop doing so then we will paste indecent photographs of their mothers and sisters outside their houses ... no one will be allowed to tear those posters off and no one will be able to stop us from doing so ... so I ask these people to stop protesting illegally," Atish Sarkar a senior Trinamool Congress Leader from North 24 Parganas said in a public meeting leading to massive



public outcry. Elsewhere, TMC MLA Lovely Mitra from a public warned the opposition workers including their Leaders to stop raising their fingers at the Government. "We know how to take care of you ... if you don't stop this mischief then you will feel the consequences," said Mitra whose husband is an IPS officer.

For the first time perhaps in its 13 years' rule the TMC has been under an unprecedented pressure with the common citizens from all walks of life descending on the streets on a regular basis against a degenerated system. While the TMC leadership suspended the North 24 Parganas Leader for one year, the agitating doctors immediately demanded his arrest. "The statement made by this man shows what respect his superiors have for the women of the State ... the RG Kar incident is just a product of that mentality and we want a change in that mentality which can only take place if there is a change in the system," said Dr S Roychowdhury one of the specialist doctors. Ankush an advocate at Calcutta High Court said that such statements made against the women were defamatory in nature and should lead to immediate arrest. "He should have been arrested immediately," he said.

## Centre moves SC over CISF deployment in RG Kar College

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre on Tuesday moved the Supreme Court alleging "unpardonable" non-cooperation by the West Bengal Government in providing logistical support to the CISF, tasked with providing security at the RG Kar Medical College and Hospital in Kolkata, where a trainee doctor was raped and murdered.

Termining the alleged non-cooperation of the Trinamool Congress (TMC) government as an example "symptomatic of a systemic malaise", the Union Ministry of Home Affairs has sought a direction to West Bengal authorities to extend full cooperation to the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF). In case of their failure to do so, the Centre urged the apex court to initiate contempt proceedings against the state government officials concerned for "wilful non-compliance" of the

court orders. On August 20, the apex court had termed the rape and murder case of a medic at the hospital as "horrific" and issued a slew of directions including setting up of a 10-member National Task Force to formulate a protocol for ensuring the safety and security of doctors and other health care professionals. Besides, the top court had taken a serious note of mob violence in the hospital and the allegation that the Kolkata police fled the scene, and ordered deployment of CISF at the hospital to enable doctors to resume work. In an application filed in the case the apex court has initiated on its own, the MHA said the plea "concerns the deployment of CISF personnel at the R G Kar Medical College, including the hostels where the resident doctors are staying to ensure their safety".

## Shivaji statue collapse: Sindhudurg district collector shunted out

T N RAGHUNATHA ■  
MUMBAI

In an administrative reshuffle undertaken a week after the much-discussed collapse of the imposing statue of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, the Maharashtra Government has shunted out Sindhudurg district collector Kishor S Tawade and posted him in a relatively insignificant position as the new Managing Director of the Pune-based Maharashtra State Farming Corporation Ltd. Anil A. Patil, currently the Managing Director of the State-run Haffkine Bio Pharmaceuticals Corporation Ltd, will replace Tawade as the district collector of Sindhudurg district, where a 35-foot tall statue had crashed on August 26 sparking major public uproar across the state. It may be recalled that the icon-

## Omar Abdullah approached BJP, RSS for forming Govt after 2014 polls: Rana

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

A day after former Chief Minister Omar Abdullah launched a whisper campaign suggesting that the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) was perhaps again in touch with People's Democratic Party (PDP) through RSS leader and former party general secretary, Ram Madhav one of his long time close aide, Devender Singh Rana, who dumped him and joined BJP on Tuesday hit back claiming "power hungry" Omar Abdullah repeatedly approached top BJP and RSS leaders for forming a Government in J&K after 2014 Assembly polls.

Interacting with the media persons in the Kangan area of Ganderbal district after party MP Mian Altarf's son Mian Mehr Ali filed his nomination papers from the seat on Monday Omar told reporters in response to a question, "There is no doubt in the fact that if there is any party that has good connections with Ram Madhav, it is the PDP. He was the man behind the 2015 BJP-



PDP alliance. He is perhaps being brought again for the same purpose". In response, Devender Rana, younger brother of MoS PMO Dr Jitendra Singh told reporters today Omar is saying that all political parties of Kashmir are part of the BJP and are close to it whereas the "reality is the opposite". Rana said in 2014 Omar met senior leaders of the BJP and RSS in Delhi and offered unconditional support to BJP for Government formation in J&K and also agreed to a full-term BJP Chief Minister. Rana said, "Now, you (Omar) are saying that Ram Madhav is close

to PDP but the truth is that you repeatedly approached top BJP and RSS leaders for forming a Government in J&K". In Srinagar PDP Chief Mehbooba Mufti also responded to Omar's jibe. "We don't do anything 'chupke chupke'. When we were talking to Ram Madhav, we did so openly. Devender Singh Rana is saying all this now, but Ghulam Nabi Azad has been saying that they (NC) go and talk to them (BJP) in the night. Mufti said Ram Madhav might have come here but we have no contact with him...". Rana further reminded Omar that he was the union minister in the Vajpayee Government but today he is saying that NC has nothing to do with the BJP. Rana said, "In 2014, when NC had 15 MLAs, Omar went to Delhi and met senior most leaders of the BJP and also knocked on the doors of RSS leaders including Home Minister Amit Shah and the then J&K Incharge, Ram Madhav and offered unconditional support to the BJP for forming Government in J&K".

## Residents of Greater Noida society fall sick after drinking contaminated water

STAFF REPORTER ■ NOIDA/NEW DELHI

More than 200 residents of the Supertech Eco Village 2 society in Greater Noida, including 25 children, fell sick after drinking contaminated water on Monday. The issue came to light when residents were discussing water shortage on a WhatsApp group on Monday evening, citing a resident of Supertech Eco village 2. Many residents were treated at a nearby private clinic. Supertech Eco Village 2 is one of the largest group housing societies in Noida Extension, also known as Greater Noida West. It has around 20 high-rise towers, each with approximately 150 flats. However, the local health department has said that it is yet to determine the exact figure and the cause of the illnesses. "We are looking into the matter," said Dr Sunil Kumar Sharma, Chief Medical Officer at the Gautam Buddha Nagar

district hospital. "Last night a team of doctors from Bisrakh visited the society and provided treatment to the children. Today teams from the district hospital and Bisrakh have been sent. We are waiting for a detailed report," he said. Raj Kumar, a media professional and resident of Supertech Ecovillage 2, said the issue came to light when residents were discussing water shortage on a WhatsApp group on Monday evening. "One resident mentioned that his child had diarrhea and vomiting. Soon after, another resident reported the same symptoms in their child, and more people began sharing similar experiences. It quickly became evident that hundreds of residents had fallen ill," Kumar said. Another resident, Ashish Srivastava, suggested that water contamination might be the cause, as the society's water tanks were cleaned a few days ago.

## Kolhapur royal scion joins Sharad-led NCP

T N RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

In a setback to the ruling BJP ahead of the Maharashtra Assembly polls, Raje Samarjeetsinh Ghatge, a member of the erstwhile royal family of Kolhapur who recently quit the saffron party, joined the Sharad Pawar-led NCP (SP) on Tuesday. Forty-one-year-old Samarjeetsinh Ghatge is the royal descendant Raje Samarjeetsinh Vikramsinh Ghatge, who was a two-time MLA from Kagal constituency in Kolhapur district. A Chartered Accountant by profession, Samarjeetsinh Ghatge is the Chairman of the Shree Chhatrapati Shahu Cooperative Sugar Factory, the Shree Chhatrapati Shahu Milk & Agro Products Co. He is also controlling several institutions in Kolhapur district. Once considered close to deputy chief minister and senior BJP leader Devendra Fadnavis, Samarjeetsinh

Ghatge joined the NCP (SP) in the presence of Sharad Pawar. Samarjeetsinh Ghatge's entry to the NCP (SP) came after Sharad Pawar -- who is currently on a three-day tour of the sugar-rich western Maharashtra -- visited Kagal residence of Samarjeetsinh and his uncle Shrimant Raje Pravinshah Ghatge and spoke to the family members over breakfast on Tuesday morning. Talking to media persons after his meeting with Pawar, Ghatge said: "We discussed various things at the meeting. I have taken a decision to work under the guidance of Pawar Sahab". Samarjeetsinh Ghatge is likely to be fielded as the NCP (SP) candidate from Kagal constituency against the Ait Pawar-led NCP nominee Hasan Mushrif. Samarjeetsinh Ghatge had unsuccessfully contested the 2019 elections as an independent candidate against Hasan Mushrif of the united Nationalist Congress Party led

by Sharad Pawar. Mushrif had defeated Samarjeetsinh Ghatge by a margin of 28133 votes in the polls. Mushrif, who is a five-time MLA from Kagal in Kolhapur district, parted ways with Sharad Pawar and joined the Ait Pawar-led NCP after the parent party split vertically in July last year. Mushrif is currently a Cabinet minister in the BJP-led Maha Yuti government. Samarjeetsinh Ghatge's late father Vikramsinh Ghatge was a two-time MLA from Kagal. Welcoming Samarjeetsinh Ghatge's entry to her party, NCP (SP) Working President Supriya Sule expressed her happiness over the development and said: "Ghatge is a diamond. We know his value". On his part, Samarjeetsinh Ghatge announced on X: "New Leap, New Challenges", while calling upon his supporters to witness his cross-over to the NCP (SP) at a rally to be held in the evening at Kagal later in the evening.

## Amanatullah Khan was dealing with ill-gotten money: ED

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) alleged on Tuesday that AAP MLA Amanatullah Khan was dealing with "ill-gotten" money and indulged in "tainted" cash transactions to purchase an immovable property in Delhi. ED has arrested the 50-year-old legislator from Okhla on Monday after conducting a search at his house. The agency also charged him with "non-cooperation" and "avoiding investigation" in the case claiming he only appeared once out of the 14 summonses sent to him to deposit and get his statement recorded by the investigating officer. "During the course of investigation, multiple searches were conducted dated 09.10.2023 and dated 02.01.2024 and incriminating materials were seized. ED investigation revealed that under the directions of Amanatullah Khan, Zeeshan Haider and Daud Nasir were managing the ill-gotten money of Amanatullah Khan during his tenure as Chairman of Delhi Waqf Board and used the same to make cash payments via Kausar Imam Siddiqui for the purchase of property at 275-276, TTI Tikona Park, Okhla, Delhi belonging to Jawed Imam Siddiqui". ED investigation revealed huge cash deposits in the bank

accounts of Jawed Imam Siddiqui and his wife and that the handwritten notings by Kausar Imam Siddiqui in the seized diary pertains to the same tainted cash transactions made on behalf of Amanatullah Khan for the purchase of the said property at Tikona Park. During the course of PMLA investigation, 14 summonses were issued to Amanatullah Khan. However, he appeared in response to only one summons, that too on the direction of Hon'ble Supreme Court of India. The money laundering case against the AAP MLA stems from two FIRs, one by the Delhi ACB and the other filed by the CBI to probe alleged irregularities committed during his tenure as the chairman of the Delhi Waqf Board from 2016-2021. He was charged by the ED and the CBI with committing illegalities in the appointment of Group C and D employees in the Delhi Waqf Board (DWB) causing a wrongful loss to the government apart from a claimed "misuse and abuse" of his official position as the Waqf Board Chairman in allotment of the tenancy of properties of the DWB without following proper procedure. The agency said it has filed two complaints before a local court for non-compliance of the summonses.

## Congress and AAP talk about...

From Page 1 AAP also told the media that defeating the BJP was a priority of all the Opposition parties and added any decision regarding alliance would be taken with the approval of the Aam Aadmi Party's national convenor and Delhi Chief Minister Kejriwal. Singh, however, said any official stand on the issue will be taken by AAP's in-charge of Haryana affairs Sandeep Pathak and State President Sushil Gupta. "Any final decision in this regard will be taken by our leaders associated with organisational and election-related works in Haryana after approval of Kejriwal," said the senior AAP leader. Delhi Minister Atishi said the decision will be taken only after Kejriwal is released. "Rahul Gandhi has sought opinion of Congress leaders and only they can give answer. We have got to know about it from media. As far as alliance goes, the decision will be taken after Arvind Kejriwal comes out of jail," she told reporters on the sidelines of an event. Earlier, the Congress and AAP, partners in Indian National Developmental Inclusive Alliance (INDIA Bloc), had entered into a seat-sharing alliance for Lok Sabha polls in Delhi, Haryana and Gujarat. In Haryana, AAP State President Gupta was the lone party candidate in the Lok Sabha polls in the State. He lost to BJP's Naveen Jindal. Interestingly, the Congress and AAP contested the Lok Sabha polls independently in Punjab. Gupta recently asserted that AAP was ready to strongly contest all the 90 Assembly seats in Haryana on its own with an alliance with the people of the state.

## Former chief of iconic...

From Page 1 During the police investigation, Salil was declared an absconder by the Saket court. The second case against the former Atlas Cycles president was initiated after a woman, Sunita Bansal, filed a complaint and alleged that Salil had cheated her of Rs 4 crore. In 2020, Kapoor's sister-in-law Natasha Kapoor also died allegedly by suicide. She had returned from a wedding in Kolkata and left behind a purported suicide note saying she just could not live anymore. Her husband Sanjay Kapoor was a joint president of Atlas Cycles.

## India's Air Defence gets...

From Page 1 As regards the proposals cleared on Tuesday, for modernisation of the tank fleet of the Indian Army, the proposal for procurement of Future Ready Combat Vehicles (FRCVs) has been cleared. The FRCV will be a futuristic Main Battle Tank with superior mobility, all terrain ability, multilayered protections, precision and lethal fires over and real-time situational awareness. The Rs 50,000 crore project to buy 1,700 future-ready combat vehicles to replace the T-72 tanks in its fleet will enhance the battle readiness of the army, sources said. The Army is actively involved in operations at high altitudes especially Line of Actual Control (LAC) facing China and deserts and is looking to modernise its fleet of armoured vehicles, including tanks and infantry combat vehicles. Meanwhile, nod was also given for procurement of Air Defence Fire Control Radars, which will detect and track aerial target and provide firing solution. The proposal has also been approved for Forward Repair Team (Tracked) which has suitable cross country mobility for carrying out in-situ repair during mechanised operations. This equipment is designed and developed by Armoured Vehicles Nigam Limited, and is authorised for both

## WB Government passes...

From Page 1 Kamduni rape case had taken place in the northern fringes of Kolkata where a college girl was abducted and gang-raped and murdered by some alleged ruling party men while she was returning home from her college. Her legs were torn apart from two sides. He said that there was nothing in the new Bill that was not there in the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita adding, the Aparajita Bill was an attempt to divert the people's attention from the RG Kar case. However the Chief Minister hit back showing how crime against women in the BJP-ruled States like UP, Gujarat were increasing while in Bengal the women got justice getting justice Praising the Bill TMC's Kunal Ghosh said that "history has been created in Bengal ... as the Mamata Banerjee led government to pass a Bill providing for stringent punishment to those involved in incidents of rape and murder." Meanwhile in a related development the former Principal of RGMCH Sandip Ghosh who was on Tuesday arrested by the Central Bureau of Investigation on charges of corruption was on Tuesday remanded to 8 days' CBI custody by the city Bankshall Court. Ghosh's lawyer did not apply for bail.

## Netflix questioned over Hindu code names for IC 814...

From Page 1 The series, directed by Anubhav Sinha, is based on the 1999 hijacking of Indian Airlines Flight IC 814 by Pakistan-based terror outfit Harkat-ul-Mujahideen, has come under severe criticism for using 'Bhola' and 'Shankar' as code names for two of the hijackers. Using the #BoycottNetflix, #BoycottBollywood and #IC814, a section of social media users have also objected to the "humane" projection of the perpetrators. Voicing concern over the depiction of terrorists in the web series, a senior official has said nobody has the right to play with the sentiments of the nation. Sources said at the meeting with Jaju, Netflix has provided an assurance to conduct a content review and guarantee that all future content on their platform will be sensitive to and in accordance with the nation's sentiments as well as children's sensitivity. The government said it was taking the issue "very seriously" and underscored that nobody had the "right to play with the sentiments of the people of this nation". "We have been supporting content and content creators, but facts cannot be distorted. Under creativity, sentiments cannot be hurt," the government explained while summoning the Netflix content head. Sources further cleared that while the government has no immediate plans of banning the series, it has asked officials at Netflix to find a way to douse the controversy. "Nobody has the right to play with the sentiments of the people of this nation. Indian culture and civilisation should always be respected," another official source said. "Should we allow any foreign people to slipshod over our cultural values," the source said without elaborating. The sources said filmmakers have to think before portraying something in a wrong manner. "You may be liberal, but you cannot portray institutions in a wrong manner," the source said. Meanwhile, CPI(M) leader Subhashini Ali on Tuesday said the "Sanghis" are objecting to it fearing that the young generation will know that terrorists were set free by the Atal Bihari Vajpayee government. In a post on X in Hindi, CPI(M) Politburo member

## Bestial cow vigilantes in...

From Page 1 The accused told the police that when they asked the victim's car to be stopped, the driver accelerated, following which they opened fire and Mishra was killed on the spot near the Gadhupuri toll in Palwal, the police officer said. All the accused have been sent to judicial custody after being presented in a city court, he said, adding that the illegal weapon and the car used in the crime have been recovered. Further investigations are underway, the police said. Meanwhile, Haryana police arrested the eighth accused on Sunday in connection with a lynching in Haryana's Dadri, where a migrant worker from West Bengal was beaten to death on suspicion that he had eaten beef.



# Russian missile kills 50 in Ukrainian city

AP ■ KYIV

Two Russian ballistic missiles struck a military training facility and nearby hospital in a central-eastern region of Ukraine, killing at least 50 people and wounding 210 others, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said Tuesday. The strike occurred in the city of Poltava, the capital of the region of the same name, officials said. Poltava is located about 350 kilometres (200 miles) southeast of Kyiv. The city is on the main highway and rail route between Kyiv and Ukraine's second-largest city, Kharkiv, which is close to the Russian border. The strike appeared to be one of the deadliest carried out by Russian forces since the war began more than 900 days ago on February 24, 2022. "One of the buildings of the (Poltava

Military) Institute of Communications was partially destroyed. People found themselves under the rubble. Many were saved," Zelenskyy said in a video posted on his Telegram channel. "All necessary services are involved in the rescue operation," he added. He said he had ordered "a full and prompt investigation" into what happened. Zelenskyy didn't provide any further details. The missiles hit shortly after the air raid alert sounded, when many people were on their way to a bomb shelter, Ukraine's Defence Ministry said, describing the strike as "barbaric." Rescue crews and medics saved 25 people, 11 of them dug out from the rubble, a Defence Ministry statement said. Poltava Gov. Filip Pronin announced three days of mourning starting on Wednesday. "A great tragedy for Poltava region and



entire Ukraine," Pronin wrote on his Telegram page. "The enemy certainly must answer for all (its) crimes against humanity," he said. The strike came on the day that Russian President Vladimir Putin

visited Mongolia. There was no indication that his hosts would heed demands to arrest him on an international warrant for alleged war crimes. Zelenskyy repeated his appeal for Ukraine's Western partners to ensure swift delivery of military aid. He has previously chided the US and European countries for being slow to make good on their pledges of help. He also wants them to ease restrictions on what Ukraine can target on Russian soil with the weapons they provide. Some countries fear that hitting Russia could escalate the war. "Ukraine needs air defence systems and missiles now, not sitting in storage," Zelenskyy wrote in English on Telegram. "Long-range strikes that can protect us from Russian terror are needed now, not later. Every day of delay, unfortunately, means more lost lives," he said.

# Attempted jailbreak at Congo prison kills 129 people as chaos erupts

AP ■ KINHASA (CONGO)

An attempted jailbreak in Congo's main prison left 129 people dead, including some who were shot and others who died in a stampede at the overcrowded facility, authorities said Tuesday. Activists alleged the death toll was higher but did not provide a figure. A provisional assessment showed that 24 inmates were fatally shot by "warning" shots fired by guards as they tried to escape from the Makala Central Prison in the capital of Kinshasa early on Monday, Congolese Interior Minister Jacquemin Shabani said on the social platform X.

There are also 59 injured people taken into care by the government, as well as some cases of women raped," he said, adding that order has now been restored at the prison, part of which was burned in the attempted jailbreak. He did not elaborate on the incidents of rape. The prison holds both male and female inmates. It was not known if all 129 fatalities were inmates. Also, it wasn't immediately clear how the stampede occurred as details of the jailbreak remained sparse. Makala, Congo's largest penitentiary with a capacity for 1,500 people, holds over 12,000 inmates, most of whom are awaiting trial, Amnesty International said in its latest country report. The facility has recorded previous jailbreaks, including in

2017 when members of a religious sect stormed the prison and freed dozens of inmates. Gunfire inside the prison started around midnight on Sunday and lasted into Monday morning, local residents in the area said. "Shots were ringing out everywhere," said Stephane Matondo, who lives nearby, adding that military vehicles arrived shortly after and that the main road to the prison was blocked. Videos posted online show bodies lying on the ground inside the prison, many of them with visible injuries. Another video shows inmates carrying bodies that appeared to be lifeless onto a vehicle. There were no signs of forced entry into the prison, which is located in the city center, 5 kilometers from the presidential palace. The attempted escape was plotted from inside the prison by inmates in one of the wings, Mbemba Kabuya, the deputy justice minister, told the local Top Congo FM radio. In the hours following the attack, officials visited the prison as authorities convened a panel to investigate the incident. Congolese President Felix Tshisekedi, who is in China on an official visit, has not publicly commented on the incident. Calling for an independent investigation, rights groups and the opposition accused the government of using excessive force and covering up the true death toll. An earlier statement from a senior government official on Monday said



Russian President Vladimir Putin, right, walks with Mongolian President Ukhnaagiin Khurelsukh, left, during welcoming ceremony at Sukhbaatar Square in Ulaanbaatar (Mongolia) on Tuesday. AP/PTI

# Mongolia ignores an international warrant for Putin's arrest, giving him red-carpet welcome

AP ■ ULAANBAATAR

Russian President Vladimir Putin received a red-carpet welcome to Mongolia on Tuesday, as the country ignored calls to arrest him on an international warrant for alleged war crimes stemming from Moscow's invasion of Ukraine. The trip is Putin's first to a member nation of the International Criminal Court since it issued the warrant in March 2023. Ahead of his visit, Ukraine urged Mongolia to hand Putin over to the court in The Hague, and the European Union expressed concern that Mongolia might not execute the warrant. The warrant put the Mongolian government in a difficult position. After decades under communism with close ties to the Soviet Union, it transitioned to democracy in the 1990s and built relations with the United

States, Japan and other new partners. But the landlocked country remains economically dependent on its two much larger and more powerful neighbours, Russia and China. The ICC has accused Putin of being responsible for the abductions of children from Ukraine. Member countries are required to detain suspects if a warrant has been issued, but Mongolia needs to maintain its ties with Russia and the court lacks a mechanism to enforce its warrants. The Russian leader was welcomed in the main square in Ulaanbaatar, the capital, by an honour guard dressed in vivid red and blue uniforms styled on those of the personal guard of 13th century ruler Genghis Khan, the founder of the Mongol Empire. A throng of people watched from behind temporary barriers as Putin and Mongolian

President Khurelsukh Ukhnaa walked up the red-carpeted steps of the Government Palace and bowed toward a statue of Genghis Khan before entering the building for their meetings. A small group of protesters who tried to unfurl a Ukrainian flag before the ceremony were taken away by police. Five others who gathered a few blocks west of the square held up an anti-Putin banner and Ukrainian flag but disbanded after hearing about the arrests. As Putin was welcomed in Mongolia, his forces struck a military training facility and nearby hospital in Poltava, Ukraine, killing at least 41 people and wounding 180 others, the country's president said. The strike appeared to be one of the deadliest by Russian forces since the war began on February 24, 2022. Mongolia and Russia signed

agreements for a feasibility study and the design of a power plant to upgrade the supply of aviation fuel to Mongolia. Another agreement covered an environmental study of a river where Mongolia hopes to build a hydroelectric plant that Russia says would pollute Lake Baikal on the Russian side. Putin also outlined plans to develop the rail system between the countries. He invited the Mongolian president to attend a summit of the BRICS nations — a group that includes Russia and China among others — in the Russian city of Kazan in late October. Khurelsukh accepted, according to Russian state news agency RIA Novosti. On Monday, the EU said it had shared its concern that the ICC warrant might not be executed with Mongolian authorities.

# Pope opens Asia odyssey with stop in Indonesia to rally Catholics

AP ■ JAKARTA

Pope Francis arrived in Indonesia on Tuesday at the start of the longest trip of his pontificate, hoping to encourage its Catholic community and celebrate the tradition of interfaith harmony in a country with the world's largest Muslim population. After an overnight flight from Rome, Francis was wheeled off the plane in his wheelchair and onto the tarmac for a welcoming ceremony under Jakarta's perennial hazy, humid and polluted skies. Two children wearing traditional clothes handed him a bouquet of vegetables, fruits, spices and flowers. Francis planned to rest for the remainder of the day, given the rigors of an 11-day voyage zigzagging across time zones that will also take him to Papua New Guinea, East Timor and

Singapore. However, the Vatican said the 87-year-old pope met with a group of refugees, migrants and sick people at the Vatican residence in Jakarta. Outside the residence, he was greeted by well-wishers eager to catch sight of the first pope to visit since St. John Paul II in 1989. "When I saw him in the car I was so touched, goosebumps," said Fanfan, a 49-year-old housewife from West Jakarta who uses only one name. "I hope he will hopefully appear in front of me to wave his hand again." Francis' first full day of activities begins Wednesday with visits to the country's political leaders and meetings with Indonesian clergy who are helping to fuel the growth of the Catholic Church in Asia. Indonesian President Joko Widodo welcomed the pope, saying in a broadcast statement

that "Indonesia and the Vatican have the same commitment to fostering peace and brotherhood, as well as ensuring the welfare of humanity." The highlight of Francis' first stop will be his participation Thursday in an interfaith meeting in Jakarta's iconic Istiqlal mosque with representatives of the six religions that are officially recognised in Indonesia: Islam, Buddhism, Confucianism, Hinduism, Catholicism and Protestantism. The mosque, the largest in Southeast Asia, sits across a piazza from the capital's main Catholic cathedral, Our Lady of Assumption, and the two are so close to each other that the Muslim call to prayer can be heard during Mass. Their proximity is not coincidental, but strongly willed as a symbol of religious freedom and tolerance that is enshrined in Indonesia's Constitution.

# New Nepal notes to feature disputed areas

PTI ■ KATHMANDU

Nepal's central bank is preparing to print new banknotes featuring the revised map that includes disputed territories with India within a year, a media report said on Tuesday. Nepal Rashtra Bank has already forwarded the process of printing the banknotes with the new map, which includes Kalapani, Lipulekh and Limpiyadhura, the bank's joint spokesperson Dilliram Pokharel was quoted as saying by online news portal Nepalkhabar.com. The bank has already forwarded the process of printing the new notes, Pokharel said, adding that it would be completed in six months to one year.



Queen Camilla smiles after speaking to Adrian Gott, CEO of Stonegate Farmers, a new state-of-the-art facility where free-range and organic eggs are packed in Lacock (England) on Tuesday. AP/PTI

# Venezuelan judge issues arrest warrant for Opp prez candidate

AP ■ CARACAS

A Venezuelan judge on Monday issued an arrest warrant for the opposition's former presidential candidate Edmundo González as part of a criminal investigation into the results of a disputed election. The warrant was issued at the request of authorities who accuse González, a former diplomat, of various crimes including conspiracy, falsifying documents and usurpation of powers. The warrant comes just over a month after election officials declared President Nicolás Maduro the winner of an election that his opponents say he lost. Authorities sought the warrant after González failed to appear three times to answer questions from prosecutors in a criminal investigation stemming from the disputed election results. Ruling party-loyal electoral authorities declared Maduro the victor of the July 28 election, hours after polls closed. They did not show any detailed results to back up their claim as they had offered in previous presidential elections. The lack of transparency has drawn international condemnation against Maduro and his allies. The opposition, however, managed to obtain more than 80% of vote tally sheets, which are printed by every electronic voting machine, and said they show Maduro lost by a wide margin against González. González was summoned to the prosecutor's office as recently as Friday. Attorney General Tarek William Saab opened the investigation against González after he and opposition leader María Corina Machado revealed what they said were the results shown in the tally sheets and published them online. Maduro's ruling party and the National Electoral Council have refused to publish their copies of tally sheets that the electronic voting machines printed after polls closed. Instead, as international pressure mounts to release a breakdown of results, Maduro asked the country's high court to audit the electoral process. The Supreme Tribunal of Justice, stacked with Maduro loyalists, concluded on Aug. 22 that the vote counts published by the opposition were false and certified Maduro's victory.

# Salvagers abandon effort to tow burning oil tanker in Red Sea

AP ■ DUBAI

Salvagers abandoned an effort to tow away a burning oil tanker in the Red Sea targeted by Yemen's Houthi rebels as it "was not safe to proceed," a European Union naval mission said Tuesday, leaving the Sounion stranded and its 1 million barrels of oil at risk of spilling. While a major spill has yet to occur, the incident threatens to become one of the worst yet in the Iranian-backed rebels' campaign that has disrupted the USD 1 trillion in goods that pass through the Red Sea each year over the Israel-Hamas war in the Gaza Strip. It also has halted some aid shipments to conflict-ravaged Sudan and Yemen. "The private companies responsible for the salvage operation have concluded that the conditions were not met to conduct the towing operation and that it was not safe to proceed," the EU's Operation Aspidos mission said, without elaborating. "Alternative solutions are now being explored by the private companies." The EU mission did not respond to questions from The Associated Press about the

announcement. The safety issue could be from the fire still burning aboard the vessel. NASA fire satellites detected a blaze in the area the Sounion was anchored in Tuesday. The US State Department has warned a spill from the Sounion could be "four times the size of the Exxon Valdez disaster" in 1989 off Alaska. Meanwhile, there's the threat of attacks by the Houthis, who on Monday targeted two other oil tankers travelling through the Red Sea. The Houthis have suggested they'll allow a salvage operation to take place, but critics say the rebels have used the threat of an environmental disaster previously involving another oil tanker off Yemen to extract concessions from the international community. The Houthi initially attacked the Greek-flagged Sounion tanker on August 21 with small arms fire, projectiles and a drone boat. A French destroyer operating as part of Operation Aspidos rescued its crew of 25 Filipinos and Russians, as well as four private security personnel, after they abandoned the vessel and took them to nearby Djibouti.

# 13 migrants dead as tragedy strikes boat off French coast

AP ■ PARIS

The mayor of a French coastal town being used in a rescue operation says 13 migrants are dead after their boat ripped apart Tuesday during an attempted crossing of the English Channel. Dozens of people plunged into the treacherous waters of the busy channel. "Unfortunately, the bottom of the boat ripped open," said Olivier Barbarin, mayor of Le Portel near the fishing port of Boulogne-sur-Mer, where a first aid post was set up to treat victims. "It's a big drama." A maritime rescue official who spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorised to discuss details of the operation confirmed that at least 13 migrants were dead. Etienne Baggio, a spokesman for the French maritime prefecture that oversees that stretch of sea, said "more than 10" people were dead but he didn't have an exact number. The prefecture said the boat got into difficulty off Gris-Nez point. Both Baggio and the mayor said rescuers recovered 61 people from the waters. Sea temperatures off northern France were around 20 degrees C, or about 68 F.

# China-linked 'Spamouflage' network mimics Americans online to sway US political debate

AP ■ WASHINGTON

When he first emerged on social media, the user known as Harlan claimed to be a New Yorker and an Army veteran who supported Donald Trump for president. Harlan said he was 29, and his profile picture showed a smiling, handsome young man. A few months later, Harlan underwent a transformation. Now, he claimed to be 31 and from Florida. New research into Chinese disinformation networks targeting American voters shows Harlan's claims were as fictitious as his profile picture, which analysts think was created using artificial intelligence. As voters prepare to cast their ballots this fall, China has been making its own plans, cultivating networks of fake social media users designed to mimic Americans. Whoever or wherever he really is, Harlan is a small part of a larger effort by US adversaries to use social media to influence and upend America's political debate. The account was traced back to Spamouflage, a Chinese disinformation group, by analysts at Graphika, a New York-based firm that tracks online networks. Known to online

researchers for several years, Spamouflage earned its moniker through its habit of spreading large amounts of seemingly unrelated content alongside disinformation. "One of the world's largest covert online influence operations — an operation run by Chinese state actors — has become more aggressive in its efforts to infiltrate and to sway US political conversations ahead of the election," Jack Stubbs, Graphika's chief intelligence officer, told The Associated Press. Intelligence and national security officials have said that Russia, China and Iran have all mounted online influence operations targeting US voters ahead of the November election. Russia remains the top threat, intelligence officials say, even as Iran has become more aggressive in recent months, covertly supporting US protests against the war in Gaza and attempting to hack into the email systems of the two presidential candidates. China, however, has taken a more cautious, nuanced approach. Beijing sees little advantage in supporting one presidential candidate over the other, intelligence analysts say. Instead, China's disinformation efforts focus on campaign issues

particularly important to Beijing — such as American policy toward Taiwan — while seeking to undermine confidence in elections, voting and the US in general. Officials have said it's a longer-term effort that will continue well past Election Day as China and other authoritarian nations try to use the internet to erode support for democracy. A message left with the Chinese Embassy in Washington was not immediately returned. Compared with armed conflict or economic sanctions, online influence operations can be a low-cost, low-risk means of flexing geopolitical power. Given the increasing reliance on digital communications, the use of online disinformation and fake information networks is only likely to increase, said Max Lesser, senior analyst for emerging threats at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies, a national security think tank in Washington. "We're going to see a widening of the playing field when it comes to influence operations, where it's not just Russia, China and Iran but you also see smaller actors getting involved," Lesser said. That list could include not only nations but also criminal organ-

isations, domestic extremist groups and terrorist organisations, Lesser said. When analysts first noticed Spamouflage five years ago, the network tended to post generically pro-China, anti-American content. In recent years, the tone sharpened as Spamouflage expanded and began focusing on divisive political topics like gun control, crime, race relations and support for Israel during its war in Gaza. The network also began creating large numbers of fake accounts designed to mimic American users. Spamouflage accounts don't post much original content, instead using platforms like X or TikTok to recycle and repost content from far-right and far-left users. Some of the accounts seemed designed to appeal to Republicans, while others cater to Democrats. While Harlan's accounts succeeded in getting traction — one video mocking President Joe Biden was seen 1.5 million times — many of the accounts created by the Spamouflage campaign did not. It's a reminder that online influence operations are often a numbers game: the more accounts, the more content, the better the chance that one specific post goes viral.

# Markets settle flat after record rally; Nifty gains for 14th day

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Benchmark equity indices Sensex and Nifty took a breather after a record rally and ended on a flat note on Tuesday, with the 50-stock index settling in the green for the 14th straight session. Halting its 10-day rally, the 30-share BSE Sensex dipped 4.40 points or 0.01 per cent to settle at 82,555.44. During the day, it dropped 159.08 points or 0.19 per cent to 82,400.76. The NSE Nifty eked out a marginal gain of 1.15 points to settle at 25,279.85, its highest-ever closing level. Among the 30 Sensex firms, Bajaj Finance, Infosys, Adani Ports, JSW Steel, HCL Tech, Bharti Airtel, IndusInd Bank and Tata Motors were the biggest laggards. ICICI Bank, Bajaj Finserv, Titan, Nestle and HDFC Bank were among the gainers. In Asian markets, Seoul,



Tokyo, Shanghai and Hong Kong settled lower. European markets were quoting in the negative territory. The US markets were closed on Monday for the Labour Day holiday. "Amid mixed global signals and the absence of significant new catalysts, aside from the

anticipated Fed rate cut, which is already factored in, the domestic market took a breather. Mild caution emerged due to a recent slowdown in manufacturing activities, which indicates a slowdown in demand," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial

Services. Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) bought equities worth Rs 1,735.46 crore on Monday, according to exchange data. The Global oil benchmark Brent crude declined 1.79 per cent to USD 76.13 a barrel. Surging for the 10th straight session on Monday, the BSE benchmark jumped 194.07 points or 0.24 per cent to settle at an all-time closing high of 82,559.84. During the day, it surged 359.51 points or 0.43 per cent to reach a new intra-day record peak of 82,725.28. The Nifty climbed 42.80 points or 0.17 per cent to settle at a lifetime closing high of 25,278.70, taking its winning run to the 13th day in a row. During the day, it soared 97.75 points or 0.38 per cent to hit a fresh all-time intra-day peak of 25,333.65.

## Domestic saving to remain top net lender in coming decades: RBI Deputy

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Reserve Bank Deputy Governor Michael Debabrata Patra on Tuesday said domestic saving has largely financed the investment needs of the economy and will remain the top net lender in coming decades. In a keynote address at the Financing 3.0 Summit: Preparing for Viksit Bharat organised by the Confederation of Indian Industries (CII) here, the deputy governor said that recently, the net financial savings of households has almost halved from 2020-21 levels due to behavioural changes in the form of unwinding of prudential savings accumulated during the pandemic and shifting from financial assets to physical assets like housing. "Going forward, boosted by rising incomes, households will likely build back their financial assets. This process has already begun. Households' financial assets have increased from 10.6 per cent of GDP during 2011-17 to 11.5 per cent during 2017-23 (excluding



the pandemic year)," Patra said. Their physical savings have also risen in the post-pandemic years to over 12 per cent of GDP and could rise further, he said, adding they had reached 16 per cent of GDP in 2010-11. "Accordingly, households will remain the top net lenders to the rest of the economy in the coming decades," the senior RBI official said. He further said the private corporate sector has drastically reduced its net borrowings from the rest of the economy, reflecting a combination of rising internal accruals and subdued capacity creation. Looking ahead, Patra said its net borrowing requirement is likely to rise on the back of a revival in the capex cycle. "These financing requirements will largely be

met by households and external resources," he noted. The deputy governor said that net dis-saving of the public sector has been moderating, albeit unevenly. This sector will remain a net borrower in the economy, given the critical role envisaged for fiscal policy in shaping India's future. If the nation, as a whole, has a deficit, it borrows from the rest of the world and the inflow of foreign savings helps finance its investment needs, he added. For India, domestic savings have largely financed the overall investment requirements of growth, with external financing playing a supplemental role as reflected in overall modest current account deficits. "As the productive capacity of the economy rises and its ability to absorb foreign

resources expands, the volume of external financing and its composition may undergo fundamental shifts, but in the light of past experiences, external debt sustainability will remain a policy priority," Patra said. During his address, Patra also delved into India's growth story and the fact that the country is riding on the cusp of a distinct demographic advantage. He said a productive workforce is critical for value creation in an economy, while capital would play an important supportive role. CII Director General Chandrajit Banerjee, in his welcome address, lauded the performance of India's external sector and underscored the role of the RBI in ensuring that its financing is stable, sustainable, and aligned with the country's economic policies. He said greater investment can be useful to garner more financing in physical infrastructure, components for the digital economy, as well as emerging sectors like renewable energy, warehousing, semiconductor ecosystem, and data centres.

## Rupee falls five paise against US dollar

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The rupee declined 5 paise to 83.96 (provisional) against the US dollar on Tuesday, tracking a strong greenback against major currencies overseas and a sluggish trend in domestic equities. However, lower crude oil prices in international markets capped the decline in the local unit, forex traders said. At the interbank foreign exchange market, the rupee opened 3 paise lower at 83.94 against the American currency and traded in the range of 83.94-83.98 during the day. It finally settled at 83.96 (provisional) against the US dollar, 5 paise lower than its previous close. On Monday, the domestic currency settled at 83.91. "The rupee in tandem with Asian currencies fell to its support zone of 83.97 as the



Reserve Bank of India seemed to present at 83.97 to protect any further weakness in the currency. There was good amount of FPI and oil companies outflow which resulted in the rupee reaching near to the all-time low of 83.97," Anil Kumar Bhansali, Head of Treasury and Executive Director of Finrex Treasury Advisors LLP, said. Meanwhile, Sensex recovered most of its losses to settle at 82,555.44 for the day, 4.40 points below its previous close, while the Nifty inched

up 1.15 points to 25,279.85. The dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was up 0.15 per cent at 101.80. Brent crude, the international oil benchmark, declined 2.1 per cent to 76.26 in futures trade. Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) were net buyers in the capital markets on Monday, as they purchased shares worth Rs 1,735.46 crore, according to exchange data.

## Bajaj Housing Finance IPO to open on Sep 9

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Bajaj Housing Finance on Tuesday said it has fixed a price band of Rs 66-70 per share for its Rs 6,560-crore initial share sale. The initial public offering (IPO) will open for public subscription on September 9 and conclude on September 11 and the bidding for anchor investors will open for a day on September 6, the company announced. The proposed IPO comprises a fresh issue of equity shares of up to Rs 3,560 crore and an offer for sale (OFS) of equity shares to the tune of Rs 3,000 crore by parent Bajaj Finance. The share sale is being conducted to comply with the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) regulations, which require upper-layer non-banking finance companies to be listed on stock exchanges by September 2025. Proceeds from the fresh issue



will be used to augment the company's capital base to meet future capital requirements. Investors can make a bid for a minimum of 214 equity shares and in multiples of 214 equity shares thereafter. Bajaj Housing Finance is a non-deposit-taking Housing Finance Company registered with the National Housing Bank since September 2015. It offers financial solutions for

purchasing and renovating residential and commercial properties. It has been identified and categorised as an "upper layer" NBFC by the RBI in India and its comprehensive mortgage products include home loans, loans against property, lease rental discounting and developer financing. For the entire financial year 2023-24, the housing lender

posted a net profit of Rs 1,731 crore, marking a growth of 38 per cent from Rs 1,258 crore in FY23. Aadhar Housing Finance and India Shelter Finance are two housing finance companies that have been listed on the stock exchanges in recent months. In June, Bajaj Housing Finance filed preliminary papers with Sebi for a Rs 7,000 crore IPO, comprising fresh shares worth Rs 4,000 crore and an OFS component of Rs 3,000 crore by its parent. The market regulator gave its clearance to the company's maiden public issue earlier this month. Kotak Mahindra Capital Company Ltd, Axis Capital, IIFL Securities, BofA Securities India Ltd, SBI Capital Markets Ltd, Goldman Sachs (India) Securities Private Ltd and JM Financial Ltd are book-running lead managers that will manage the company's public issue.

## World Bank projects India to grow at seven per cent in FY25

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Indian economy is projected to grow at 7 per cent in the current financial year on the back of recovery in the agriculture sector and rural demand. According to the World Bank Report released on Tuesday, India's growth continues to be strong despite a challenging global environment. The growth rate of India, which accounts for the bulk of the South Asia region, is expected to remain strong at 7 per cent in 2024-25, the World Bank said in the India Development Update. Recovery in agriculture will partially offset a marginal moderation in industry, it said, adding that services will remain robust.

# SRM University hosts 4th convocation ceremony

PNS ■ ANDHRA PRADESH

SRM University-AP hosted its prestigious 4th Convocation Ceremony on September 02, 2024, felicitating the graduates with their well-earned degrees for scholastic excellence. The monumental event was graced by the honourable presence of Chief Guest Padma Bhushan Senapathy Kris Gopalakrishnan, Chairman-Axilor Ventures and Co-founder of Infosys; Guest of Honour Mr Rohit Kapoor, Chief Executive Officer, Food MarketPlace, Swiggy; Founder Chancellor of SRM Group of Institutions

Dr T R Paarivendhar, Pro-Chancellor of SRM University-AP; Dr P Sathyanarayanan, Vice Chancellor Prof. Manoj K Arora, Registrar Dr R Premkumar; Dean-Academic Affairs Dr Vinayak Kalluri; Other dignitaries, Faculty, staff and parents of the graduating batch. 1,018 graduates, including 24 PhD scholars, were conferred their degrees on this momentous occasion, and 18 Gold Medalists, 5 Silver Medalists, and 5 Bronze Medalists were recognised for their outstanding achievements. "We are a multidisciplinary research-



intensive university where education revolves around 5 I's - Integrative curricula, Interdisciplinary Research and Learning, Innovation, Industry and International

Collaborations and Inclusivity," stated Vice Chancellor, Prof. Manoj K Arora, in his welcome address. During his briefing about the annual report, Prof.

Arora also highlighted the university's stellar growth and accomplishments in the past academic year. "In the last academic year, we have relaunched the Liberal Arts

school with 3 new departments, implemented a revamped curricula that is adaptive and responsible to changing needs and expanded our industrial partnerships. Our faculty now consists of 350 in number, contributing to 688 publications, 108 published patents, 24 sponsored research and industry projects, 21 startups, along with students." Chief Guest Padma Bhushan Kris Gopalakrishnan, renowned global business & technology thought leader, delivered the much-anticipated convocation address to the graduating Class of 2024. With an analogy to the Paris

Olympics 2024, Mr Kris Gopalakrishnan ignited the graduating batch with key takeaways to ensure remarkable success in all their future endeavours. He stated, "The knowledge and skillset that you have acquired from your university will equip you to face the problems that the world poses. The strength of the university lies with the alumni. Remember to contribute to the society, your nation and moreover your alma mater." Mr Rohit Kapoor, the esteemed Guest of Honour, applauded the students for their outstanding achievements and expressed

his deep respect for SRM University-AP for establishing a new-age institute and preparing the students for an impactful future. "We must strive towards world-class standards in the case of academics, research, and innovation and deriving nobility in becoming the superior version of yourselves," advised Mr Kapoor. The ceremony also witnessed the auspicious presence of Founder Chancellor Dr T R Paarivendhar, who congratulated the young students for this remarkable achievement and advised, "Knowledge is power.

## IN BRIEF

### MIXED REALITY TRAINING MODULES FOR ADVANCED KNOWLEDGE OF RAILWAY STAFFS

**MALIGAON:** In order to improve the knowledge of railway staffs on safety related aspects, Northeast Frontier Railway has introduced an innovative Virtual Reality & Mixed Reality (VR & MR) training module at its Multi-Disciplinary Zonal Training Institute (MDZTI), Alipurduar.

### GOVERNMENT OF INDIA PATENTED GNDU FACULTY'S 5 INNOVATIVE GADGETS

**AMRITSAR:** The Guru Nanak Dev University announces the patenting of five equipment related to the Gym Apparatus- Gym Equipment, Gym Equipment for Shoulder Exercise, Stress Relieving Equipment, Hand Exerciser Resilience Equipment and Shoulder & Arm Wheel Apparatus.

### POWERGRID ACQUIRES 'BHADLA-III & BIKANER-III TRANSMISSION LIMITED' UNDER TBCE

**MAHARASHTRA:** Power Grid Corporation of India has acquired "Bhadla-III & Bikaner-III Transmission Limited", for the Transmission System Project for System Strengthening for interconnections of Bhadla-III & Bikaner-III Complex.

### RECPCDL HANDS OVER TUMKUR-II REZ

**GURUGRAM:** REC Power Development and Consultancy Limited, handed over a project specific SPV (Special Purpose Vehicle), viz, Tumkur-II REZ Power Transmission Limited to M/s G.R. Infraprojects Limited (GRIL).

## Mahindra launches new Jawa 42 FJ motorcycle

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Mahindra Group-owned premium motorcycle firm Classic Legends, which has three premium motorcycle brands under it, is running a marathon and will navigate any challenge in rebuilding the resurrected brands like Jawa, Group Chairman Anand Mahindra has said. Speaking at the launch of all-new Jawa 42 FJ motorcycle here, Mahindra also said that stories build brands and brands are nothing but aggregation of stories. The latest offering from the Classic Legends is priced at Rs 1.99-lakh onwards. In October 2016, Mahindra & Mahindra, through its subsidiary Classic Legends Private Limited (CLPL), signed a licensing deal to launch motorcycles under the Jawa brand name in India and other East Asian countries. The same year, the company acquired British motorcycle brand BSA as well. "Stories build brands. Brands are nothing but aggregations of stories. Why they were formed, how they were formed. How they were built.



How they grow. New brands tell new stories. And often all resurrected brands also tell new stories," Mahindra said at the launch. "We are privileged at Classic Legends to have the opportunity to both resurrect an old brand and to build new stories, a new history. However, contradictory that might sound," he said. All of us have challenges, all of us are looking forward to the excitement that this brand will bring, he said, adding, "we are running a marathon, we may fall, we may sweat

(but) we will rise up," Mahindra stated. Noting that Classic Legends is one of the growth Gems at the Group, Mahindra Group CEO and Managing Director Anish Shah said the company is well positioned at the second spot in the premium motorcycle segment in the country and is looking forward to acquiring the top slot. "The 2024 Jawa 42 embodies our design-led approach to motorcycle engineering. We've taken our time with this bike, pushing the

boundaries of the 'price-performance' matrix. As pioneers of neo-classics in India, the 42 FJ is a testament to our challenger spirit and disruptive approach," said Anupam Thareja, Co-founder of Jawa Yezdi Motorcycles. "We are trying to make an Indian Global two-wheeler company," he added. With the expansion of the '42 Life' series, Jawa has extended the ideal balance of design, price, and performance across motorcycle formats, to appeal to a wide swathe of discerning riders, the company said.



## Gold and silver price slip

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Gold prices slipped Rs 50 to Rs 74,050 per 10 grams in the national capital on Tuesday, according to the All India Sarafa Association. The precious metal of 99.9 per cent purity had finished at Rs 74,100 per 10 grams in the previous session on Monday. Silver prices also slumped by Rs 250 to Rs 85,250 per kilogram on Tuesday. It had closed at Rs 85,500 per kg in the previous close. Additionally, gold of 99.5 per cent purity fell by Rs 50 to Rs 73,700 per 10 grams. On the global front, Comex gold is trading at USD 2,531.40 per ounce, up by USD 3.80 per ounce or 0.15 per cent. "Gold fluctuated in a narrow range on Tuesday as traders remained sidelined ahead of US job market data that may

influence the US Federal Reserve's (Fed) interest rate-cutting path," Saumil Gandhi, Senior Analyst of Commodities at HDFC Securities, said. However, silver was quoted 1.81 per cent lower at USD 28.62 per ounce in the international markets. During the week, traders will focus on various job reports, including Jolts job openings, ADP Non-farm employment change, non-farm payrolls and unemployment data, which will impact the Fed's policy decision and could provide direction for gold prices, Gandhi added. Anticipation of an interest rate cut at the upcoming US Fed meeting would likely keep gold prices elevated, according to Angel One's Prathamesh Mallya, DVP-Research of Non-Agri Commodities and Currencies.

# 'SWEET' SACRIFICE AND SLEEPLESS NIGHTS

PTI ■ PARIS

Carrying a back injury for more than a year, history-making Indian javelin thrower Sumit Antil's path to Paralympic glory was paved with a 'sweet sacrifice' and several sleepless nights. The 26-year-old faced a tough choice in the build-up to the Paralympics — give up his favourite sweets or put his career at risk due to rapid weight gain and a back injury that troubled him before the Asian Para Games in Hangzhou last year where he won a gold. On the advice of his physio, Antil grudgingly gave up sweets, followed a strict training regimen and shed around 12 kilograms in just two months. His sacrifice paid off on Monday when the Sonepat-lad became the first Indian man and only the second Indian overall to defend a Paralympic title, clinching gold in the F64 category with a record throw of 70.59m. This new mark bettered his previous Paralympic best of 68.55m set in Tokyo Paralympics three years ago. "I've reduced around 10-12 kilos. My physio, Vipin Bhai, told me that the weight was putting pressure on my spine. So, I cut out sweets, which are my favourite, and focused on eating right," he revealed in a media interaction here.

Fixing his back by taking adequate rest is the first thing Antil will do after his return to India. "I was not at 100 per cent. I had to take a painkiller before my throw, and even during training, I haven't been at my best. The first priority is to fix my back after we return to India because rest is crucial with the type of injury I have. "With competitions so close, I haven't been able to rest properly and have constantly taken precautions to protect my back. I've been careful with every movement to avoid aggravating it further," he added. He also thanked his coach (Arun Kumar) for always knowing what he needed, staying up nights to plan his schedule, and putting in tremendous effort. He said his coach had worked even harder than him. "I also started doing CrossFit workouts, sprints, and trained hard. It's been two years with my coach, and he's like an elder brother to me. He knows exactly what I need and when I need it. "I've seen him stay up nights to plan my schedule. My team has put in a tremendous effort for me, and I feel truly blessed to have them," he said. "Once you reach a certain level, the responsibility on you increases, and all eyes are on you. Hopefully, after this, I'll finally get some rest. I've been continuously on the field for

## SUMIT ANTIL ON DEFENDING PARALYMPIC GOLD DESPITE BACK INJURY



the past two to three years." He said he sustained the injury in 2023 ahead of the Asian Para Games and kept competing in back-to-back tournaments. Antil dreamed of becoming a wrestler and was inspired by Olympic bronze-medallist Yogeshwar Dutt. However, in 2015, his life changed when a tractor accident led to the amputation of his left leg below the knee. Undeterred, Sumit was introduced to para-sports in 2017 by a fellow athlete from his village. Despite the pain and challenges of training with a prosthetic leg, he found his new passion in javelin. Under coach Naval Singh's guidance, Sumit's relentless dedication transformed him into a champion. The F64 category, in which he competes, is designated for athletes with lower limb impairments, including those using prosthetics or dealing with leg length discrepancies. SLEEPLESS NIGHTS: Antil said after struggling with sleep and increased nervousness due to the high expectations of people around him, he was now feeling relaxed. "I think it's been three nights since I've had proper sleep. When you're at a certain level, and people expect things from you, the nervousness increases," he said. "Back in Tokyo, no one knew

me, and I didn't feel that much pressure; I could sleep peacefully. But this time, the last 3-4 days have been extremely stressful," he revealed. However, his throw was short of his own world record of 73.29m and he seemed a tad unhappy with this. "I'm used to a different synthetic track, here (on Mondotrack) I was slipping, I was not able to feel the runway with my legs. "I know my coach is not that happy but will do it in coming competitions," he rued. ONE OF A KIND: SANGWAN: Paralympic Committee of India vice president Satya Prakash Sangwan, who is also the chef de mission for the Indian squad here, said he always knew Antil would script history. "Since 2017, I've seen how hard he works and how down-to-earth he has been from day one. I knew right from the start that he would make history. Athletes like him are rare. You can see how humble he is from winning gold in Tokyo and here as well," he said. "His dedication to his sport and his country is unmatched; he doesn't get distracted by anything else. I've never come across an athlete who remains so humble and down-to-earth, even after achieving so much success. I am truly proud of Sumit," he added.

## There is sadness, I aimed for gold in Paris: Paralympic silver medallist shuttler Suhas

PTI ■ PARIS

Indian para-shuttler Suhas Yathiraj is an emotional mess after his second successive Paralympic silver. A part of him is proud of the achievement but then he is also grappling with feelings of "sadness and disappointment" at missing out on gold. The 41-year-old went into the ongoing Games as world no.1 and was expected to fetch gold in men's singles SL4 category. However, he ended with a silver, going down in straight games to Lucas Mazur of France in the summit clash on Monday evening. "...Coming here as world no.1 and as world champion, there was pressure and expectations on me. I too expected that I will do well here. Ideally I would have liked to win gold medal, which is every player's dream," he said on Tuesday. "Winning the silver is a mixed feeling, there is sadness and disappointment of missing the gold. But when the feeling sinks in then you will realise qualifying for Paralympics and representing your country was a big thing. "And winning the silver is a proud moment and I feel extremely humbled and grateful," added the 2007 batch IAS officer. Suhas looked tentative in the summit clash and was no match for the formidable Frenchman, losing 9-21 13-21. It was the same opponent against whom the Indian had lost in the Tokyo Paralympics final. Asked to compare the two silver medals, Suhas said: "Earlier the country and myself didn't have the belief that we



can win medals in Paralympics badminton. I had no idea what my performance would be. That was a different kind of feeling. "Both the silver medals had their challenges. As I said, the first time people don't take you so seriously until you perform at the highest level. But playing under expectations in itself is a different kind of pressure." Born with a congenital deformity in his left ankle, which significantly affected his mobility, Suhas competes in SL4 category which is meant for athletes competing while standing with less severe impairment than in SL3. The gold might have eluded him again, but Suhas said the journey has been enjoyable. "When I started this Paralympics qualification journey, I had not played for one-two years and was world no. 39. From there to reach

top-12 and then qualify for Level-1 tournaments and from there to win Asian Para Games gold, world championships gold, become world no.1...You need to enjoy this journey," he said. Suhas, an Arjuna awardee, feels Tokyo 2020 was a "watershed moment" for Indian Olympic and Paralympic sports. "There is huge change that para sports has witnessed. Tokyo 2020 was watershed moment for Indian para sports and Indian Olympic sports in general. "Everyone knows cricket is popular in India but in the last many years, the way Olympic sports and Paralympics sports have received support from the society is unimaginable. "In the coming years it will only grow and that will improve our medal tally as well," he signed off.

## Chelsea sells Angelo Gabriel to Saudi club to continue unlikely career arc of Brazilian teen

AP ■ LONDON

The unlikely career arc of Brazilian teenager Angelo Gabriel continued when he completed a move to Saudi team Al Nassr for a reported USD 25 million on Tuesday, a year after joining Chelsea from Santos. In the year he was on Chelsea's books after a USD 17 million move, Gabriel never played for the English club because he went on loan to Strasbourg - one of the teams run by Chelsea's American investors. The 19-year-old Gabriel was part of Chelsea's squad for the preseason tour of the United States but has left on a



permanent deal to Al Nassr - where Cristiano Ronaldo plays. The move was announced a day after the Saudi transfer window shut and will help

Chelsea meet financial rules in the Premier League and UEFA. Another teenage Brazilian, Deivid Washington, joined Chelsea from Santos last year around the same time as Gabriel and reportedly came close to making a permanent move to Strasbourg. "We wish Angelo the very best as he begins the next chapter in his career and thank him for his efforts during his time with Chelsea," the English team said. Gabriel became the youngest player in the history of Brazil's national championship at the time when he made his senior debut for Santos at 15 years, 308 days.



## Bopanna-Sutjiadi pair enters US Open mixed doubles semis

PTI ■ NEW YORK

Veteran Indian tennis star Rohan Bopanna and his Indonesian partner Aldila Sutjiadi entered the semifinals of the US Open mixed doubles with a hard-fought win over Australian Matthew Ebden and Barbora Krejickova of the Czech Republic here. The eighth seeded Indian-Indonesian pair registered a 7-6(4) 2-6 10-7 win over fourth seeds Ebden and Krejickova in the quarterfinal that lasted one hour and 33 minutes on Monday night. Bopanna and Sutjiadi had earlier defeated Australian duo of John Pears and Katerina Siniakova of the Czech Republic 0-6 7-6(5) 10-7 in a second-round match. Bopanna and Sutjiadi will play American pair of Donald Young and Taylor Townsend in the semifinals. The 44-year-old Bopanna had already crashed out of the men's doubles competition after he and his partner Ebden, seeded second, lost 1-6 5-7 to the 16th seed Argentine combination of Maximo Gonzalez and Andres Molteni in the third round.

## Indian recurve archer Pooja enters quarterfinals

PTI ■ PARIS

World Para Championship silver medallist Pooja Jatyan beat Yagmur Sengul of Turkey in straight sets to storm into the quarterfinals of recurve women's open archery competition at the Paris Paralympics on Tuesday. The 27-year-old, who got a bye into the pre-quarters after finishing inside top-9 in the ranking round, won 6-0 and will face Tokyo Paralympics bronze medallist Wu Chunyan of China in the quarters later in the day. The second-seeded Chunyan defeated Oyuun-Erdene Buyanjargal of Mongolia in her pre-quarterfinal match. Pooja took the first set by hitting three 9s in a row. Continuing her stronghold, she totalled 26 points while her



opponent struggled with a 22 to concede a 2-0 lead to the Indian. The archer from Gurgaon faced some resistance from Sengul in the third set when she hit two 9s and an 8, but

her life forever, resulting in polio in her left leg. Despite these setbacks, Pooja's resilience shone through as she embraced archery in her childhood. Pooja won a silver medal in the Women's Team event at the Asian Para Championship 2023. In 2024, she continued her success by securing a silver medal at the 8th Fazza Para Archery World Ranking Tournament and claiming gold medals in both the Women's Team and Mixed Team events at the Para Archery European Cup 2nd Leg. In the recurve open category, archers shoot from a standing position at a distance of 70m at a 122cm target made up of 10 concentric circles scoring from 10 points down to 1 point from the centre outwards.

## No. 1 Jannik Sinner gets past Tommy Paul to set up quarterfinal against Daniil Medvedev

AP ■ NEW YORK

Top-seeded Jannik Sinner reached the U.S. Open quarterfinals by shaking off a slow start and coming through in the clutch at the end of tiebreakers that decided the first two sets, then pulling away to get past No. 14 Tommy Paul 7-6(3) 7-6(5) 6-1. Two weeks removed from being cleared in a doping case stemming from two positive tests in March, Sinner moved into a showdown against 2021 champion Daniil Medvedev, the only past winner at Flushing Meadows still in the men's field. Sinner, a 23-year-old from Italy, claimed his first Grand Slam title at the Australian Open in January by defeating Medvedev in five sets in the final after dropping the first two. They also met in the Wimbledon quarterfinals in July, and Medvedev won that one. "It's going to be a lot of running," Sinner said, "so

hopefully (I'll) be ready physically." Against Paul on Monday night, Sinner was not at his best at the outset, falling behind by a double-break at 4-1 after 20 minutes at Arthur Ashe Stadium. "That's where you want to be. ... It's definitely different than any other setting," Paul said. "It's electric." A loud crowd was backing the American, to no one's surprise. As the match went on, plenty of chants of "U-S-A!" or "Let's go, Tommy! Let's go!" rang out. There also were several moments where spectators clapped after faults by Sinner - considered poor etiquette in tennis, that drew repeated admonishments from the chair umpire, who pleaded for no noise between first and second serves. Sinner finished the initial set with 15 unforced errors on the forehand side alone, but he cleaned that up quickly and closed the match with just six of the rest of the way. "There are some ups and



downs, obviously, in best-of-five. That's normal to have," Sinner said. "But finding my rhythm in the end of the match hopefully helps ... In the next match." Everything hinged on the tiebreakers. The first was tied 3-3, before Sinner grabbed the last four points. Paul led 5-4 in the second, but Sinner took the last three points. That meant Sinner has now won 14 of his past 15 tiebreakers, a stretch that dates

to a tournament in Halle, Germany, in June. The lone exception was one he lost against Medvedev at Wimbledon. Sinner dropped the first set he played at the US Open, but he's won the next 12. Paul was trying to get his third career quarterfinal and first at Flushing Meadows. He also was trying to become the first American to beat a man ranked No. 1 at the US Open since Andre Agassi eliminated Lleyton Hewitt in 2002. Instead, Paul fell to 0-6 at majors against players ranked in the top 10. Sinner improved to 32-2 with four titles on hard courts in 2024 and he's now reached at least the quarterfinals at all four Slams this year. Earlier on Monday, the No. 5-seeded Medvedev picked up a 6-0 6-1 6-3 victory over Nuno Borges that briefly was interrupted early in the third set when the electronic line-calling system was shut down because of a fire alarm. The other quarterfinal on the top half of the men's bracket will be No. 10 Alex de Minaur vs No. 25 Jack Draper. De Minaur beat Jordan Thompson 6-0 3-6 6-3 7-5 in an all-Australian matchup, while Draper became the first British man in the US Open quarterfinals since Andy Murray in 2016 by defeating Tomas Machac 6-3 6-1 6-2. The men's quarterfinals on Tuesday are No. 4 Alexander Zverev vs No.

## Rafael Nadal tells a Spanish TV show he doesn't think Jannik Sinner intended to dope

AP ■ NEW YORK

Rafael Nadal told a Spanish television show that he doesn't think Jannik Sinner intended to use a banned substance and that the current No 1-ranked man didn't receive preferential treatment when he was cleared of doping after testing positive twice in March for trace amounts of an anabolic steroid. "I trust that he wasn't punished because those who judged this case determined quite clearly that there was nothing to punish. ... I don't believe the sentence has anything to do with him being No 1 in the world," 22-time major champion Nadal said in an interview with "El Hormiguero" on Monday. Sinner played Tommy Paul in the fourth round of the US Open on Monday night. The International Tennis Integrity Agency said on August 20 that it was determined the banned performance-enhancer entered Sinner's system unintentionally through a message from his physiotherapist, and that is why the player was not suspended. Asked about the matter in New York before the



US Open began, Novak Djokovic said he gets why some tennis players question whether there's a double-standard in the sport. Nadal, who sat out the US Open, said: "I believe in someone's good faith. I know Sinner; I don't believe that Sinner wanted to dope." "In the end, justice is justice, and I believe in justice," Nadal said. "I believe in the bodies that have to make decisions and that they do it based on what they believe is right.

IT'S TIME TO MAKE AMENDS: PAT CUMMINS ON TEST SERIES AGAINST INDIA

PTI ■ MELBOURNE

Australian captain Pat Cummins is looking at the upcoming five-match rubber against India as a chance to "make amends" for the successive Test series defeats at home against their fierce rivals.

He said the next Border-Gavaskar Trophy, which will start on November 22 in Perth, promises to be a 50-50 affair.

India retained the trophy in the last four series, from 2016-17 to 2022-23. India had defeated Australia in their own backyard in the last two series in 2018-19 and 2020-21.

Cummins said Australia are hoping to draw confidence from their win over India in the World Test Championships Final at London last year.

"The last two series here in Australia, we haven't been successful, so it's been a long time. Hopefully, it's time to make amends," Cummins told Star Sports.

"You know, we've played them (India) plenty of times where they've beaten us, but we've also had plenty of wins against them as well, which we'll draw confidence from. The most recent Test match was, of course, the World Test Championship in neutral conditions, and we came out on top in that match.

"It's always fiercely competitive, and it always feels like it's 50-50. I'm 10 out of 10 excited for the Border-Gavaskar Trophy," he added.



Senior batter Steve Smith agreed with the skipper and said it will be a "big summer" for Australia against a "well-balanced" Indian team.

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really good cricket out here. They've played good cricket when we've been over in India as well, where we know they're very, very difficult to beat. So it's going to be a big summer. It's going to be an exciting one."

importance of the rivalry by keeping it at par with the Ashes.

"For Australian cricket, you've got the Ashes and then you've got the Border Gavaskar Trophy in there. I mean there's a long history in the Ashes but that Border Gavaskar rivalry, if you like, has just grown from strength to strength over each series.

"And now we see it as a five Test match series which is fantastic for not only the rivalry but for the Test series as well. Whether it's the calibre of player, the calibre of matches that we see as fans and as cricketers just continues to grow strength on strength each series," he said.

"Now (with) India obviously winning a number of series in a row, it's created even a bigger rivalry between the two countries. I mean both teams are well known to one another, we play each other very often across the formats, so I'm sure it'll be another exciting series," Starc added.

All-rounder Glenn Maxwell said an India-Australia contest in any format has become a must-watch affair now. "I think over the last few years, definitely, it feels like the two teams sort of swap places in the rankings quite a bit. Whichever format it is, you will always see these two teams at number one at some stage around the world," Maxwell said.

"The different contexts we've had in both countries across all formats certainly provide a lot of highlights for the rest of the world. It's always must-watch cricket whenever these two teams are playing."



Bangladesh thump Pakistan by 6 wickets in 2nd Test to complete historic sweep

AP ■ RAWALPINDI (PAKISTAN)

Bangladesh completed a six-wicket victory over here on Tuesday and achieved an historic sweep of their two-Test series.

Needing 143 more runs on the final day with 10 wickets in hand, Bangladesh knocked them off for the loss of four wickets when Shakib Al Hasan hit the winning boundary. Bangladesh recorded only its second bilateral series win of two or more Tests away from home; the last was against the West Indies in 2009.

The tourists won the opening Test by 10 wickets and required just four days in the second after the first day was washed out in Rawalpindi.

The visitors' second innings finished on 185-4, and Shakib was 21 not out and Mushfiqur Rahim 22 not out. Bangladesh was 26-6 in the

first innings but Litton Das and Mehidy Hasan Miraz led a gallant recovery.

Fast bowlers Hasan Mahmud, Nahid Rana and Taskin Ahmed dismissed Pakistan for 172 in the second innings to leave Bangladesh a victory target of 184 in four sessions. The Bangladesh top order showed plenty of resilience to flatten Pakistan plans of a dramatic comeback, with meaningful contributions from opener Zakir Hasan (40), captain Najmul Hossain Shanto (38) and Mominul Haque (34).

They extended Pakistan's miserable home record in Tests to 10 matches without a win. Pakistan's last home win was in December 2021 against South Africa at Rawalpindi. Shan Masood has suffered a second consecutive clean sweep since he was elevated to the test skipper last year, having lost to Australia 3-0.

WTC Final to be played at Lord's from June 11-15 next year: ICC

PTI ■ DUBAI

The third World Test Championship (WTC) final will be played at the iconic Lord's between June 11 and 15 next year, announced the International Cricket Council on Tuesday.

The ICC has marked June 16 as the reserve day, if required. "The ICC World Test Championship Final has quickly become one of the most anticipated events in the cricketing calendar and we are pleased to announce the dates for the 2025 edition," said ICC CEO Geoff Allardice in a statement.

The Lord's is hosting the WTC final for the first time as Southampton (2021) and the Oval (2023) were the venues for the two previous title matches. India featured in those two finals, but lost to New Zealand in the inaugural match and last year they were defeated by Australia. Currently, Rohit Sharma's India are sitting in pole

NZ award central contracts to Nathan Smith and Josh Clarkson

PTI ■ AUCKLAND

Promising all-rounders Nathan Smith and Josh Clarkson have been awarded New Zealand's central contract for the first time, replacing Devon Conway and Finn Allen in the 20-member list. Clarkson has played three ODIs and six T20Is for the Black Caps since debuting against Bangladesh in Dunedin at the end of last year, while Smith was the standout performer for Wellington during the most recent Plunket Shield season at the domestic level in New Zealand.

The two spots were left vacant after Conway and Allen declined the offers last month. Conway, who has signed up for Joburg Super Kings in SAT20, has signed a casual agreement with NZC that will make him available for all internationals except for the Sri Lanka white-ball matches in January. New Zealand coach Gary Stead said Smith and Clarkson deserved their first central contracts and believes the duo can make an impact at international level over the coming months.



ball squads over the past twelve months which shows the strides he's made in his game," he said. "Josh will provide depth and adds value

given the volume of white-ball cricket on the horizon." Both Smith and Clarkson have also represented New Zealand at Under-19 level at the 2016 ICC Under-19 World Cup in Bangladesh, alongside fellow contracted players Glenn Phillips, Rachin Ravindra and Ben Sears.

Purani Dilli 6 beat Central Delhi Kings by 33 run to enter DPL playoffs

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Purani Dilli 6 rode on Lalit Yadav's unbeaten 46 off 29 balls and Prince Yadav's 3/15 to beat Central Delhi Kings by 33 runs in their final league stage match and qualify for the playoffs of the Delhi Premier League T20 tournament here.

Put into bat, Purani Dilli 6 notched 173 for 6 in their allotted 20 overs, and then dished out a clinical bowling performance to restrict Central Delhi Kings to 140 for 8 on Monday night.

They exploited the early swing at the Arun Jaitley Stadium to restrict Central Delhi Kings to 39 for 2 inside Powerplay. Prince Yadav drew first blood by dismissing Dhruv Kaushik, and the second wicket came through a run-out.

Can't rest on laurels, time to start afresh and retain ACT title: Harmanpreet

PTI ■ BENGALURU

Indian men's hockey team captain Harmanpreet Singh said it's time to move on from the euphoria of a second successive Olympic bronze medal if the side desires to retain its Asian Champions Trophy title in Hulubuir, China this month. Under Harmanpreet's leadership, India won a second successive bronze medal for the first time in over half-a-century at the Olympics in Paris recently. But Harmanpreet said it's time to move and start afresh after a deserving break for the Asian showpiece to be held from September 8 to 17.

"With a brief break after the Paris Olympics, the team is ready to take on the best hockey playing nations in Asia and prove its mettle. "We had a good outing in Paris but hockey is a very close game, we cannot rest on our laurels," the skipper said before leaving for China in the early hours on Tuesday. "The aim will be to play high-octane hockey and retain our title." Besides India, the Asian Champions Trophy will feature Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, Japan and hosts China. India will begin their campaign against China on September 8, followed by a match against Japan on September 9.

FIFA says \$6.5 billion of international spending in transfer window

AP ■ ZURICH

Spending on transfer fees in international men's player deals cooled off during the mid-year trading period, according to International Federation of Association Football (FIFA) research published on Tuesday. FIFA said clubs committed to spend USD 6.46 billion on buying players in cross-border deals during the June-to-September transfer window - down from USD 7.43 billion in the same period a year ago. The average transfer fees paid by clubs in Europe, by far the richest market, was USD 3.13 million compared to USD 3.8 million a year ago. The FIFA study is not a complete guide because it does not count the biggest transfer deal of the European offseason, nor does it include moves by players between two clubs in the same country.

Kylian Mbappé joined Real Madrid without a transfer fee being paid because the France star was a free agent after letting his contract expire at Paris Saint-Germain. Still, Madrid had to pay Mbappé a signing bonus variously reported as between USD 110 million and USD 165 million. The biggest transfer fees in cross-border deals were Julián Alvarez's move from Manchester City to Atletico Madrid, reported to be about 75 million euros (USD 83 million) and Leny Yoro from Lille to Manchester United for a reported 62 million euros (USD 69 million). The FIFA study does not include deals involving two clubs in the same country where the player's registration is not transferred between member federations.

Tearful Luis Suárez announces Uruguay retirement

AP ■ MONTEVIDEO (URUGUAY)

Striker Luis Suárez will play this last game for Uruguay on Friday. Suárez was emotional as he announced he was ending a 17-year international career after the World Cup qualifier against Paraguay at Centenario Stadium. "It hurts to say it, but Friday will be my last match with my country's national team," Suárez said late Monday, unable to hold back tears at a press conference. "I am retiring because I want to step aside. I am 37 years old, there are a lot of talented players, and I know it would be difficult to get to the next

World Cup. "It is comforting to know I can retire on my terms and not have to retire due to injuries, or to not being called up. I want to say goodbye here, with my people. This is the ideal moment." Suárez debuted in 2007 and is Uruguay's all-time leading scorer with 69 goals in 142 matches. He played in four World Cups and five Copa America. He helped to lead the team to the title at the 2011 Copa, where he scored twice in the semifinals and the match-winner in the final and was named player of the tournament. "It's very difficult, but I want to be relaxed when I play my last game with the national team," he said. "I will be just as excited as I was for my first national team appearance in 2007 when I was a 19-year-old

kid. "Now, I am a veteran, an older player, whatever you want to call it, with an incredible history with the national team and I will give my life for the team on Friday." In the 2010 World Cup quarter-finals, Suárez prevented Ghana from scoring an extra-time winner with his hand on the goal line and was red-carded. Ghana missed the resulting penalty kick, Uruguay won a penalty shootout and reached the semifinals for the first time in 40 years. Suárez was hailed at home as a saviour, but he was scorned at the 2014 World Cup when he bit Italy defender Giorgio Chiellini in their last group game. It was the third of four times in his career he bit a player. FIFA banned Suarez for nine games, the longest ban in World Cup history, and he missed the rest of the tournament and the 2015 Copa America. "My fear has always been that my lasting image for my children and all Uruguayan fans would be of 2014," Suárez said. "I have gotten past that. And, I hope the people have also forgotten and they are left with all the great moments I lived in our stadium, with all the things our team accomplished, in Copas America, in World Cups."

He reached 100 caps at the 2018 World Cup and was twice named man of the match en route to the quarter-finals. But in 2022, Uruguay didn't get out of their group.



team on Friday." In the 2010 World Cup quarter-finals, Suárez prevented Ghana from scoring an extra-time winner with his hand on the goal line and was red-carded. Ghana missed the resulting penalty kick, Uruguay won a penalty shootout and reached the semifinals for the first time in 40 years. Suárez was hailed at home as a saviour, but he was scorned at the 2014 World Cup when he bit Italy defender Giorgio Chiellini in their last group game. It was the third of four times in his career he bit a player. FIFA banned Suarez for nine games, the longest ban in World Cup history, and he missed the rest of the tournament and the 2015 Copa America. "My fear has always been that my lasting image for my children and all Uruguayan fans would be of 2014," Suárez said. "I have gotten past that. And, I hope the people have also forgotten and they are left with all the great moments I lived in our stadium, with all the things our team accomplished, in Copas America, in World Cups."

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